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An explanation of the
Epistle to the Hebrews

AN EXPLANATION
OF THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

BY THE
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ERRATA.

Page 47, 13th line from bottom, for *lv* and *lvi*, read *lxv* and *lxvi*.

Page 77, 5th line from top, for *infinity*, read *infirmity*.

Page 105, 3rd line from bottom, for *presented*, read *preserved*.

Page 181, 5th line from top, for *him*, read *firm*.

Page 213, 4th line from bottom, for *are fleeing*, read *fled*.

Page 216, 8th and 15th lines from top, for *flee*, read *fled*.

Page 216, 9th line from top, for *present*, read *aorist*.

Page 240, 18th line from top, before *also*, supply *of necessity*.

Page 264, 3rd and 8th lines from top, for *priest*, read *priests*.

Page 272, 3rd line from top, for *for*, read *with*.

Page 454, 6th line from top, before *faith*, supply *this*.

Page 506, 9th and 18th lines from top, for *Hab.*, read *Hag*.

Page 512, 8th line from bottom, for *have*, read *had*.

Page 528, 1st line from top, read *to whom through Jesus*.

Page 532, 3d line from bottom, supply *with whom, if he come so soon, I will see you*.

Page 536, Perfection, for *10*, *11*, read *56*, *57*.

PREFACE.

THE explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, herewith offered to the public, is the fruit of eight years devoted to its study. One result of the study has been the conviction that the epistle claims the attention of Christian scholars, as a too much neglected portion of Holy Scripture. Not till the contents of the present volume were nearly written out in full was the thought of publishing seriously entertained. But when one's investigation of a subject of universal importance has led him to see much as it has not commonly been seen by others, the impulse to publish is natural. This may be the impulse of a prophet, who is constrained to teach as knowing what others are ignorant of, yet need to learn. Or it may be the impulse of a scholar, who feels the need of enlisting those better qualified than himself in the study of the subject that has yielded so much to him, so that it may be searched till all its riches are brought to light. The latter has been the impelling motive to the present publication.

These considerations, however, though fortified by the encouragement of friends, whose judgment might justly give confidence, and whose encouragement is hereby gratefully acknowledged, could hardly have moved the writer to this publication, had he merely the results of his own investigations to offer. The inspiration to these studies was received from Dr. von Hofmann, late professor of theology in Erlangen. The writer, having begun an acquaintance with him in his lecture-room, during a brief sojourn at that university in 1857, has continued to cultivate it since in his pub-

lished works, and thus has learned to know the extraordinary merit of his exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Delitzsch, who, before his removal to Leipzig, was long associated with von Hofmann in the university of Erlangen, bears the following testimony : " His contributions to the interpretation of our Epistle, especially in his *Schriftbeweis* (ch. i.—x.), are very complete and comprehensive. Taken all together, they furnish the most valuable hints which have yet been given as to the purpose, plan and connection of thought in the epistle, and will be recognized as doing so by every one who is more than a superficial inquirer " (Delitzsch, *Comm. on the Hebrews*, vol. I. p. 33 ; Clark's For. Theol. Lib.). What Delitzsch judged so favorably, as seen in brief form, and conveying chiefly hints, we now have in a full and mature form, adjusted to contemporary opposing criticism, in von Hofmann's work, entitled : *Die heilige Schrift neuen Testaments zusammenhängend untersucht*, Nordlingen, 1873, of which part fifth, comprising 561 pp. 8vo., is a commentary on our epistle. It would be an invaluable gift to English Christians were a suitable translation of it published. Such, however, is von Hofmann's style that, as Godet says : " its intrinsic purity does not vindicate itself till one has read a passage four or five times " (*Comm. on Romans*, Introduction). He can only be properly translated, therefore, by scholars that are able to write books of their own, and who are unlikely to undertake the drudgery of such translation. But it is possible for many, that are familiar with the German, to read von Hofmann for themselves ; and it is a grateful labor to reproduce in one's own fashion what one has so learned. This the writer has done in the composition that is hereby published. His chief encouragement to the publication is the belief, that it is rendering no small service to those who would make deeper studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to present to them, even in this fashion,

some of the fruits of von Hofmann's investigations. These will be recognized by the references at the foot of the page, and particularly by extended quotations. At chapter xiii., however, the writer has given von Hofmann's exposition instead of one of his own composition. Beside the motives for this that are stated in a preface to the translation itself, the following considerations had their influence. There is an impression in English circles and elsewhere, that von Hofmann is whimsical. Godet says of his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, that "he delights in exegetical discoveries which one can hardly be persuaded that he seriously believes in himself." The writer cannot concur in this opinion, though often unable himself to accept von Hofmann's views. As English readers may never have seen a sample of his exegetical work, the translation that concludes the present exposition is given that they may judge for themselves.

Having made the foregoing acknowledgment of indebtedness to von Hofmann, the writer deems it just to himself to say, that the present exposition is not merely a study of that author, nor a reproduction of him. It is a study of the epistle itself. By quotations from other authors, but especially by the references at the foot of the page, it will appear how fully he has consulted those that have labored on the same subject. Except where the contrary distinctly appears, these references are marks of the writer's own reading and observation. It has not, indeed, been deemed necessary to consult every author of note that has written on the Hebrews. But it is important to such studies that one should consider everything of value that has been published on his subject. The writer believes that, in the sources he has consulted, everything of this sort has at least met his eye, whether it has sufficiently arrested his attention or not.

Something should be said in explanation of the references made to authors. One object, of course, is to give credit where

it is due. But in most cases an author is referred to simply as a sponsor for a view that is mentioned, whether for concurrence or rejection. By this it will appear, that not merely imaginary views are handled. Moreover, the writer thereby avoids the appearance of representing as the common understanding of Christians what is not so, and also of presenting as his own what has been given by others. Beyond this no system in naming authors has been used. They will be found, on one account or other, good representatives of the views with which they are mentioned. No rule has been observed to choose the best. Often accident at the time of reading determined the writer's choice. By using the words "with," "against," nothing more is meant than by *pro* and *con*. viz., merely to indicate briefly the attitude of the author named toward the subject under consideration. Whether one or many names be cited, it is rarely with the purpose of supporting an opinion by the influence of a scholarly name. One must not seek to determine what shall be accepted as the meaning of revelation by taking a vote of scholars. When the labor of students is devoted to a canvass of that sort, it is a sign that knowledge has come to a stand-still. It is possible for every student of the word ultimately to know for himself whether it means what he has apprehended it to mean. Only this conviction can sustain one in the study that is demanded in order to comply with the injunction: "Search the Scriptures." The present composition was originally written out, and is now published with a view to realize the truth of this conviction.

It will be noticed that this volume presents none of the matter usually treated under the head of Introduction in that form. No apology, it is supposed, is needed for this. Yet if there were, the writer would express the opinion, that a disproportionate amount of labor has of late years been expended on that

department. One may, therefore, feel himself dispensed from traversing the same ground. The more so, because, in the interest of the inquiries : who wrote ? and when ? and under what circumstances ? and what has been the history of controversy on these topics ? the knowledge of “ what is written,” and the ability to answer the question : “ how readest thou ? ” seem in danger of perishing. The most important question belonging to Introduction is the Authorship. The writer believes that Paul was the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The earliest definite tradition of the Church ascribed it to him. The epistle itself must determine whether we shall abide by that tradition or not. Notice is taken of all that seems to throw most light on this question as it occurs in the text. And that is the best place to deal with it.

In regard to the genuine text of our epistle, the labor of exposition is much facilitated by the general harmony of the latest critical editors. The viii. edition of Tischendorf and that of Westcott and Hort have been taken as the text of the present work. Where they differ, which is very rarely, and where, for reasons of his own or derived from others, a reading different from theirs is adopted, due notice is given. The instances are few.

In regard to the translations of the text of the epistle that appear in this volume, it seems expedient to say, that they are not intended as an improved version. They are, indeed, intended to be correct. They may be that, however, without being the best for a version for English Christians. It is often said by those who are displeased with the Revision of 1881, that, while it is poor as a version, it is good as a commentary. The translations of the present volume are intended to serve the purpose so expressed. Where criticism of the versions of 1611, 1881 is intended, it is done expressly.

The writer has aimed at expressing himself in as lucid a style as the nature of his investigations admits of, and by adding

translations to Greek words when used, has even hoped to enlist readers unfamiliar with the Greek. He fears, nevertheless, that those who may have patience to read will often feel that this mark has not been reached. The writer's chief aim, however, has been another, which may be expressed in the language of Joseph Mede in a letter to L. de Dieu : *Eo enim ingenio sum (delicatulò, an moroso?) ut nisi ubi interpretatio commode et absque salebris eat, nunquam mihi satisfacere soleam.* (Jos. Mede; Works, fol. London, 1672, p. 569.) With this superior aim, it is likely that the other has often been overlooked.

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August, 1884.

The names of authors referred to in the present work may be easily identified in any good list of commentators on the Epistle to the Hebrews. It seems expedient only to name the following as the most recent writers on the subject:

Dr. KAY, in *The (Speaker's) Bible Commentary.*

Dr. MOULTON, in *The (Ellicott's) Handy Commentary.*

Dr. A. B. DAVIDSON, in *the Hand-Books for Bible Classes.*

Dr. ANGUS, in *The Popular Commentary, Schaff.*

AN EXPLANATION

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

I. 1. God having of old time by divers portions and in divers manners spoken unto the fathers in the prophets, 2. hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages.

Our epistle in the original begins very sonorously with two euphonious adverbs conjoined by : **and**, which, missing sadly the euphony, we translate : **by divers portions and in divers manners**. Being put so prominently, these adverbs emphasize the traits of the revelations so described, and thus a contrast is intimated in the revelation of which Christ was the agent, which was not given piece-meal and in many different fashions, but is a revelation whole and complete, and uniform in manner.¹ This description is not merely for description's sake. It is the appropriate preface to the following discourse, wherein "the divers portions and manners" (not all, but prominent ones) are taken in detail, viz., angels, Moses, law, sacrifices, tabernacle; and to all these is opposed the one "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, to-day and forever." Referring to the period of divine revelations preceding Christ by the term : **of old time**, it is plain that the Apostle means the whole period. And since he designates the agents of the revelations in the plural number, by the name of **the prophets**, and, in accordance with the facts of all revelation preceding, describes their revelations, as given in **many parts**

¹ So von Hofmann.

and in a variety of ways, it is evident that he means all preceding revelations of the Old Testament. Moreover, by saying: **of old time—to the fathers**, he implies just such an extended period since last the voice of revelation was heard as our canonical scriptures show between the Old and New Testaments. Thus we have an intimation that neither the Apostle nor his readers regarded as divine revelation compositions like the Old Testament Apocrypha, which being quite or comparatively recent productions at the time of this writing, would neither be described as **of old time**, nor as **spoken to the fathers**.¹

With this old time of revelation and its agents the prophets, the Apostle contrasts the period of revelation by Christ and Christ the agent. Both *the period*, as a distinct event, *and the agent*, as one totally different, are *emphatic*. This, in the sequel, becomes plain with respect to the period, when we see the period and its revelation described as doing away with the most important and the distinctive characteristics of the period that precedes it. With respect to the agent, the intended contrast is so obvious as to need no remark. The Author's purpose is to show that he supersedes all the agents of revelation that appeared before him. The revelation of old time was **to the fathers**; that of the present is **to us**; such is the Apostle's mode of expression. In this we notice the natural mode of expression in a discourse where both writer and readers are exclusively Hebrews.² These revelations, from first to last, were to the chosen people of God, the descendants of Abraham. The Apostle calls the present: **at the end of these days**. Were it simply the present that he meant, the Author would use some other phrase than: **these days**.³ This phrase always refers to a present previously expressed in the context. The only thing of the sort represented in our context is the period of God's communicating with men by revelation. This the Author treats as one period: **these days**; but distinguishes between what has been and what is now. What has

¹ So Bleek.

² Not that the writer's thoughts were exclusively occupied with the Hebrews, like Philo. So Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, Chap. xvi. § 1.

³ Comp. ix. 9.

been he calls: **of old**; and we must suppose that he attaches the pregnant meaning to that expression that he develops, viii. 13: "But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." That which is now he calls: **at the end**, which expresses that the course of revelation, or **of these days**, has come to an end, and that what God **spoke by a Son** is the final revelation of all.¹ This interpretation of his meaning is confirmed by all that the Apostle proceeds to say in exaltation of the last-named agent of revelation, which makes it inconceivable that another should follow Him, and by the fact that the entire epistle assumes that in Christ we have the final revelation, and does not contain a word that intimates that God will speak again to others of later date. Of both periods of revelation the Apostle says: **God spoke**, not "has spoken" (the aorist, not the perfect tense). What was so spoken may still speak to us. In the sequel we find the Apostle appealing to the old-time revelation as still speaking, as well as to the final revelation.

The great and distinctive fact of the revelation is, that **God spoke to us by a Son whom he appointed heir of all things**. This marks the present as a special era of revelation inconceivably superior to all that had preceded, and the statement presents the truth that the Apostle proposes to set forth in all its significance, and in some of its transcendent consequences as they especially affect God's covenant people Israel.

By saying: **a Son**, instead of using the definite article, the Author emphasizes *the relation* that this final agent of revelation sustains to God.² He is **a Son**, and thus infinitely superior to prophets. To this he joins the expression of *what sort of a Son* He is, viz., **whom he appointed heir of all things**. This qualifying expression must be read, *without an intervening comma*, in most intimate connection with the word **Son**, as an integral part of the notion intended, and not as the first of a series of things predicated of the Son, and of co-ordinate worth with the predicates following. **A Son** expresses what this agent was and is in His

¹ How this comprehends also, in the Apostle's view, what is communicated by the agents of Christ will be noticed at ii. 3, 4.

² So Bleek, von Hofmann.

own nature as related to the Father, and apart from, and therefore before His being **appointed heir of all things**. The latter expression points to something historical, yet something historical in a transcendent and eternal sense, seeing it preceded the **making of the ages**, *i. e.*, history in the common sense. If the idea arises, that the expression **a Son** suggests the notion of other sons than the one here referred to, the idea is excluded by the qualifying expression that completes the notion "Son." "A Son appointed heir of all things" excludes the idea of any other son like this. The complete phrase is, in fact, another expression for "an only Son." **All things** is to be taken as comprehensively as possible, signifying all that such "a Son" can inherit from such a Father. It can mean nothing less than it does in ver. 3, where the context requires us to understand by "all things," all that is external to God. The: **making of the ages** is only a particular under this universal term; and this particular becoming in turn a universal, the work of redemption is a particular under that. Calling this Son an "heir" expresses that what he enjoys as his own he gets, as is a son's right, by inheritance from the Father;¹ and the term "appointed" is but the correlative of that notion expressed with reference to the Father, who gives the Son His proper due. Thus the Author completes the expression "a Son" by the notions necessary to the very relation of a father and son. He uses this comprehensive representation because, as the sequel shows, his aim is, in the way peculiar to this epistle: "to make known the mystery of God's will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Christ unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth,—in whom also all are made a heritage that hope in Christ."²

The expressions: **whom he appointed heir of all things**, and: **by whom also he made the worlds**, are *not*, as is commonly done, to be taken as *co-ordinate* statements meant to display the greatness of the Son.

This appears not only in the way we have seen above and from the comparative importance of the things affirmed, but also

¹ Comp. Bleek.

² Eph. i. 10 sqq.

from the grammatical form in which the expressions are connected. In verse 3 we see how the Author does co-ordinate such notions with this aim, by using a uniform construction. By comparing the *καὶ ὁ αὖ* of ii. 10, we see that in our verse the conjunction is emphatic, meaning "also." It conjoins a notion that the Author means shall be noticed particularly. It is, as said above, a particular under the universal term: "heir of all things;" but it is *the* particular that is important to what he is going to represent.¹ By: **the worlds or ages** is of course not meant the astronomical notion which we mean by that phrase. That was an utterly unfamiliar notion to Hebrews, for which they had, therefore, no current expression such as this is that we are considering. The nearest notion that they had to our astronomical conceptions they were wont to express in such language as we have in ver. 10. Nor does the word mean the same as Cosmos.² According to Jewish conceptions, reflected in post-Biblical Hebrew, the totality of the temporal affairs of the world comprised a multitude of ages, variously determined, which constituted so many states of the world, and pertained to human history rather than to material things. Thus the term "world" extends to human conditions after earth's history shall be finished, as in the expression: "world without end."³ These were so many "ages" or "worlds," much as we speak of the Roman world, the ancient and modern world, the world of science, etc. As distinct states of the world's history, their existence and constitution may be ascribed to God, not in the sense of creation, but of "making the worlds," as in our verse, or of "preparing the worlds," as in xi. 3. Thus when the Apostle says, that God by the Son made the ages, he means the works of providence and not of creation. From this it appears that the statement is not something irrelevant and interjected without logical connection in the context, as some suppose.⁴ What the Apostle here calls "the end of these days" (ver. 1), he describes, ix. 26, as "the consummation of the ages," when Christ was manifested to put

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, a similar conjoining of several expressions introducing matters important to the argument the writer is about to make.

² Against Bleek.

³ See Del.

⁴ *e. g.* Stuart *in loc.*

away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. By saying here that Christ **made the ages**, He sets him forth in that light of sovereign authority that prepares the way for one of the chief aims of the present epistle. For the Apostle is about to show, that the coming of this final agent of revelation brings in a new world or age, and supersedes the old. As the context also intimates a contrast between Christ and the prophets, the statement we are considering marks a most significant point of contrast.

Having described the era and the agent of the final revelation, the Apostle points to the glorious position that agent assumed when His work on earth was done. A further progress in the thought is marked by passing from the statement of what God has done to what the Son did and does.

Ver. 3. Who being effulgence of his glory and impress of his substance, also upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

In this verse the main thought is expressed by the direct sentence: **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.** On this the three preceding participial clauses are dependent. The first two of these clauses (the first being a double clause) are in the present tense; but preceding the direct verb in the aorist they have the force of the imperfect. The third is formed with the aorist participle. The whole verse, however, is connected closely with ver. 2, and both vers. 2 and 3 are descriptive of the Son. The Author is still representing the final agent of revelation for the purpose of showing the contrast with all that preceded Him. Our verse 3 is intended to show that all that the Son was in Himself and by appointment *He still remains*. Thus what He did on earth is mentioned parenthetically: **having made purification of sins.** Some expression covering the period when He appeared on earth is necessary to express the idea that, in what He was before and in what He is after that revelation was made, He continues the same. If, instead of the phrase we have, the Author had resumed the expression of ver. 2, and simply said: "having spoken to us for God He sat down," etc., no one could have mistaken the parenthetical character of the clause that has

just been pointed out. The choice of another expression does not change this character. That way, however, of referring to the appearance of Christ on earth is not without a purpose. It mentions that aspect of His ministry of revelation which the Apostle means particularly to contemplate and explain, when he comes to deal with the substance of what God made known by His Son. But, related as the expression is, in a subordinate way, to the direct predicate: "He sat down," etc., the latter becomes the first subject of discourse, and the former, viz., Christ dying, comes in later, viz., ix. 15 sqq., where compare.

Proceeding, then, to characterize the Son, who is now the agent of revelation, the Apostle says: **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.** The preceding clauses in the present participle express His title to the position,¹ while that in the aorist marks when He took it. But we notice that: **being the effulgence of his glory and the impress of his substance, also upholding all things by the word of his power,** are expressions that reiterate, by way of interpretation, the substance of the statements: "whom He made heir of all things, by whom also He made the ages" (ver. 2).² This appears even in the very close grammatical conjunction³ of the first and second clauses (which we try to reproduce in the translation by: "also upholding") which thus reflect the close connection of the two clauses of ver. 2 noted above. What is thus described, therefore, belongs in the same plane with the expressions of ver. 2, and does not, as some suppose,⁴ express what the Son became after He had made purification. The Apostle means to express, that as a Son, and such as He is affirmed to be in ver. 2, He was what ver. 3, *a, b*, describes, and as such, and as thereby entitled so to do, **he sat down at the right hand of the**

¹ Comp. Phil. ii. 6.

² This appears from the consensus of New Testament scripture. The Author speaks dogmatically here, assuming the knowledge and agreement of his readers. Our explanation must adopt the same assumptions, agreeably to the plan of attending only to what this Epistle presents to us. We may refer, however, to Col. i. 15-17; Phil. ii. 6; Cor. iv. 4.

³ By τε: see Winer, New Testament Gramm., p. 434.

⁴ *e. g.*, von Hof.

Majesty on high.¹ He reposed from the work He had done, and there reposes in a station suited to His nature and dignity. But He is active in all that belongs to the place He now has.

Having explained the logical relation of the contents of ver. 3, the particulars of the statements call for our notice.

The first of these statements is, that the Son is the **effulgence of the glory of God**. The brightness or effulgence of glory is the very glory itself, as we may say the brightness of the light is light. It was this understanding of the words of the text that originated the Church's watchword; "*Light of Light*," embodied in the Nicene creed, and that justifies the inference (1), "that the Son must be *consubstantial* with the Father, inasmuch as what emanates from light must itself have the nature of light; and (2), that the divine generation of the Son must be at once a free and a necessary process within the Godhead—similar to the relation between sunlight and the sun."²

The second of these statements is, that the Son is **the impress of his substance**. The word translated **impress** means the stamp that impresses the wax with an image. The statement here is, that the substance or essence of God has in the Son that stamp or imprint of itself in which it is represented so as to be plainly apprehended.³ In other words, in the Son the divine substance appears, having shape and form. As to the **glory** and the **substance** of God, the former is the appearance of the being of God externally; the latter is His being or essence itself. As the **substance and glory** are related, so are the **effulgence** and the stamp or **impress**.

The third of these statements is, that the Son **upholds all things by the word of his power**. As has been noticed, this statement is conjoined so intimately with the two that precede as to imply

¹ The mention of His work of **making purification of sins** suggests to us the thought of Christ's state of humiliation, and the inquiry: How is the divine substance and glory and providence of the Son related to that state of humiliation? But this suggestion is our own. The Author's thought does not touch it. The present language is silent on this subject. The Author mentions the earthly work only to express the fact of what took place after it.

² Del.

³ So von Hof.

that it is a notion necessarily or logically involved in the truth that they express. Obviously, in such a connection, **all things** signifies, in the most comprehensive sense, all that is not of the divine substance, or that is external to God. This: **all the Son upholds**, or bears, and thus to Him is ascribed the continuance of all things.¹ He does this **by the word of his power**, which expresses that **the power** is *His own*, and that He exerts it by the *utterance* of His will, like the: "God said" of the original creation. For this thought must come to every Hebrew reader of these words. It is impossible to use language that would more unequivocally than these statements affirm the actual and proper divinity of the Son appointed heir of all things.

The fourth of these statements is, that the Son **made purification of sins**. As has been remarked, the Author, under this form, refers to the fact of Christ having spoken to us for God, without intending to point a contrast between the humiliation that involved and the exaltation that is next described. Said of God, this statement would express the forgiveness of sins.² But said of Christ, as the sequel of the epistle shows, it means the *expiation of sins by blotting them out*. This, as the middle voice of the verb expresses,³ He did of Himself and as His own work. This sense would be more expressly given if "by Himself" were part of the genuine text. Such, however, is not the case. Yet the presence of the words in many MSS. may be accepted as a hint from very ancient and intelligent readers, perhaps from even the first recipients of the epistle, not to let this emphatic meaning of the verb escape our notice. As expressed here, the statement means what is amplified elsewhere,⁴ that what has the virtue of cleansing away sins was done, once for all, by what Christ did on earth, viz., by His death.

It is to be noticed, that all these statements of fundamental Christian truths are not only made dogmatically, *i. e.*, without proof, but that they are introduced by indirect expressions. This implies that they were accepted truths with the readers of this

¹ Comp. Col. i. 15-17.

² Comp. LXX, Job vii. 21.

³ See Kühner, Gram. II., p. 97, § 4.

⁴ Comp. ix. 26.

epistle. The Apostle does not treat them as matters that need to be established, but freely states them as the groundwork of what he means to prove by an extended argument. This reflection is very important to a clear comprehension of the matter that is to follow. It throws light on the doctrinal status of those whom the Apostle is instructing. We will mistake the meaning of much that he writes if, on the one hand, we ascribe to his readers too little Christian knowledge, or, on the other hand, too much. The verse before us (ver. 3) is proof that they were familiar, at least, with no inconsiderable amount of fundamental truth, and we may infer that as much as this was included in the confession of their faith in Christ.¹ We must include in this reflection the fifth and final statement of our verse.

The fifth and final statement (this is by the direct verb and is the chief statement) is, that the Son **sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high**. Thus the Apostle expresses that Christ returned to heaven. He is not prompted to use the word **on high** in order to point a contrast with a previous state of humiliation; for there has been no expression or suggestion of that humiliation. It is because the Apostle himself is exalting his subject as the final agent of revelation that he concludes the description with these words. There he leaves Him, seated on high, and there he contemplates Him, and turns the thoughts of his readers to Him in all the subsequent discourse. The place is **at the right hand of the Majesty**, which is a periphrasis for the right hand of God.² **The right hand** signifies the post of confidence and executive authority and power.

In all this representation of the Son that treats so particularly of His relation to God, the Author does not use the name Father for God. This, moreover, characterizes the entire epistle. Throughout the epistle the Father (for the Author abundantly expresses the fact that He is a Father) is always called God, when the relation of the Father and the Son is involved. Only in xii. 7, 9, does the Author call God Father, and that is in relation to us, His children.

¹ Comp. iii. 1.

² Comp. Del.

The Apostle's representation of the greatness of the final revelation issues in the exaltation of the Son who is the agent of it. This he has done, without express comparison, by stating what the Son is, and simply distinguishing between former revelations and their agents, and the present revelation and its agent. But he aims to show that the present is a greater and better revelation, and to prepare the way for showing that it supersedes the old. This involves comparison. He means to do it by comparison of the final agent with all preceding agents. What has been stated so far has been with a view to this, and he proceeds without pause to that comparison :

Ver. 4. **Having become by so much better than the angels as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.**

The suddenness with which this subject of comparison, viz., **the angels**, is introduced occasions some perplexity. But in the sequel we notice that Moses (ii. 2), and Melchizedek (v. 10; vi. 20), and Levi (vii. 5), are in turn brought into comparison with as little preface. We shall also have occasion to notice in the Author a similar manner of introducing turns of thought, and obvious applications, and conclusions from statements made. We may therefore treat this as a matter of style with him. The fitness of the present comparison is obvious enough.¹ The Hebrews believed that angels were the agents of revelation, and especially that they were concerned in the giving of the law by Moses.² The Apostle refers to this belief as something that must of course suggest itself to the minds of his readers when the subject the agents of revelation came up. They would admit that Christ was greater than the prophets. But how about the angels? Angels must naturally be the chief subjects of comparison, because they have precedence of other agents, both as prior to and greater than all others, Christ alone excepted. Moreover, they too, as Christ himself, were agents that *came from heaven* to speak to men for God. Christ is better than angels. The Apostle says he **became better**. We are to understand this as expressing more than simply that Christ is better. He *became*

¹ Comp. Alford.

² See i. 14; ii. 2; comp. Gal. iii. 19.

better, which denotes something historical in the common sense of things that come to pass. But this *becoming* does not refer to the session "at the right hand of the Majesty," as if that constituted the Son better.¹ Nor are we to compare² what is said, ii. 8, 9, as if there we have expressed how Christ was for a while lower than angels, and here, as there, we have the antithesis of that.³ As has been noted (at ver. 3), we have no expression or suggestion in our context of the humiliation of Christ. Every word is in the direction of displaying His absolute greatness with comparison only of what is less great. Nor is it expressed here that He obtained this greatness through His incarnation.⁴ Our verse itself defines the becoming better by referring it to *the name* of this better agent of revelation. The name was before the ministry of revelation. The *becoming* belongs in the same plane as the "appointing heir of all things" and "making the ages." As by: **became better** is meant something in the common historical sense, it can intimate only *what the Son became to us*, by coming as the agent of revelation, as the angels became to us agents of revelation. The angels did not become angelic in nature and dignity *and name* by so coming; nor did the Son inherit His name by what He did.⁵ The angels were good as agents of revelation; the Son became to us better as such an agent. Thus the comparison expressed by: **became better** does not touch the difference between Christ and the angels in themselves considered, but as they are related to us.

The Apostle expresses the superiority in question by: **better**. This touches the key-note of the whole epistle.⁶ All through it we are held to this comparison by the expressions: "better hope," vii. 19; "better covenant," "better promises," viii. 6; "better sacrifices," ix. 23; "better possession," x. 34; "better resurrection," xi. 35. Better than what preceded, and better for us (xi. 40) than for those before us, is the notion intended by the com-

¹ Against Davidson.

² As Lün., Del., Alford, von Hof., etc.

³ See below on ii. 7.

⁴ Against Angus.

⁵ If Phil. ii. 9, 10, be urged, let it be noticed that the name is another; it is a given name; it was also Christ's name before his exaltation.

⁶ Comp. Farrar, Chap. xviii., § 1.

parison. For a notion so distinctive we may venture to coin a word, and shall hereafter use for this the word *betterness*. *Wherein* the betterness consists is to be a chief part of the showing of this epistle. For the present, the aim is to produce the conviction that it *must be* a better revelation. The method is aprioral, establishing the betterness of the agent and deducing it from that.

In proof of this betterness Paul appeals to a name : **He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.** We may call this a characteristically Hebrew way of arguing. Hebrews attached more importance to a name than we do. With them names were things ; and among them it would never become a proverb to say : "What is there in a name?" What is more important, it is Scriptural to reason in this way ; especially of all names given by God. What God calls a thing that it is. His calling it so constitutes it such, or reveals its true nature. The latter is exemplified in the case before us. For the Apostle says, the son **has inherited** His name. The perfect tense refers this matter to a different plane from that to which are to be referred the events "appointed" (ver. 2) and "became" (ver. 4), expressed in the aorist. He was already a Son when the appointing and becoming occurred. The perfect tense expresses that He received the name Son, and still has it, and by inheritance, and that without expressing when. In this is implied an unexpressed contrast with respect to the angels, who have their name otherwise, *i. e.*, God made them what they are by giving them their names. It is in effect, however, the substance involved in these names that is contrasted, and our way of thinking compels us to think of this. The only Son of God, appointed heir of all things by God, is a better agent to speak to us for God than the angels, because He is more excellent in Himself and in His relations to God than angels. Moreover, the word *διαφορώτερον* means, not only an excellence greater in degree, but also different in kind.

The Apostle proceeds to illustrate the superior excellence of the Son implied in His name, and the illustration continues through the next ten verses to the end of the present chapter. Such extended amplification of this theme is due to the import-

ance of the subjects compared, viz., the Son and the angels. The superiority of the Son to them is less obvious than His superiority to the prophets. Moreover, establishing this, the Apostle establishes the superiority of this final agent of revelation to *all* others, and consequently, and in a universal way, the betterness of what he reveals.

The Author's method of establishing this superiority is by *illustration*. He aims to make an impression of the difference between one that is called the Son of God, and angels. *His manner is dramatic*. He introduces God as speaking *to* the one, and *of* the others. There is admirable skill in this, inasmuch as it illustrates the comparative virtue of the different agents in precisely the respect in which one might be a better agent than the others to speak for God to us, viz. : the intimacy, confidence and authority the agent enjoys with God. *The language we are to consider is not an appeal to Old Testament scripture for proof* of the statement that the Son is superior to angels. The proof of that is in the more excellent name itself, or, in other words, in the fact itself that one is the Son and the others are angels. Moreover, the Old Testament language that follows does not obviously prove this, unless it be ver. 6, and that is not certainly genuine Old Testament scripture, but most likely the contrary. Nor is the language we are to consider an appeal to Old Testament scripture to prove that God does call Christ a Son. For, it must be said again, much of the following language, interpreted according to the original context, furnishes no such proof. Furthermore, the thing to be proved, according to the statement of ver. 4, would be, not that God calls Christ a Son, but that Christ **has inherited** that name, and on this point the following language, considered as scripture proof, has no bearing whatever.

Recalling the reflections above, under ver. 3, respecting the doctrinal status of the readers of this epistle, we see that Christians who embraced and confessed the doctrinal items of verses 2, 3, needed indeed no proof that God called Christ His Son, or that the name Son of God was intrinsically more excellent than that of angels. We notice, in fact, among those doctrinal items two, viz. : that Christ is "the effulgence of God's glory, and the

impress of God's substance," which, as the history of Christian doctrine shows, required establishing, as articles of faith, much more than that God called Christ His Son, or that the Son is greater than the angels. Yet, though the readers of this epistle needed no proof of these fundamental doctrines, they may have failed to represent to themselves all that was involved in them. Especially they may have failed to represent to themselves how much better a Son must be as an agent that spoke for God than all the agents that preceded Him, and, consequently, how much better must be the things that He revealed. If the following verses (5-13) were purely the Author's own language, every reader would, without difficulty, understand him to aim at producing the impression of this. He would, in a dramatic way, be representing the intimate and confidential relations of the Son with God, and God's paternal purpose of clothing Him with honor and royal glory in the world, and on the other hand, he would represent the humble and distant relations of the angels to God, and how they are destined themselves to render homage to the Son. He would do it impressively by introducing God Himself as actor and speaker, and by marking the difference of His manner to the Son and to the angels. And the thing would be admirably done. It is not the less so because the Author makes the representation in scripture language. This is, in fact, precisely what we might suppose a skillful writer would do. Any other language would be unbecoming. We may add, were all the following language like that of ver. 6, which most commentators will agree is not genuine scripture at all, few would ever have thought of regarding our vers. 5-13 in any other light than that now presented.¹

¹ An explanation that departs so widely, as the above view does, from all traditional interpretations of our passage will, of course, be challenged, and must offer something more in its defence than what is said above. Its justification must appear in its reasonableness when fully applied. The rejection of the traditional view, that regards the language of vers. 5-13 as an appeal to Old Testament scripture to prove a statement of ver. 4, must be differently justified. It is, however, justification enough that the view in question is attended with many insuperable difficulties. The hard and honest labors of the best expositors have only served to make this more manifest; and

With this view of the passage, its explanation becomes simple. The force of it does not lie in the authority of Old Testament scripture, but in the reasonableness of what the language itself represents, according to the doctrinal status of the readers. We have, then, little to do with the sense and particularly the application of that language in its original context. Of course, much of that meaning must cling to the expressions as used here. But

few passages of scripture have had as much work of that sort expended on them.

The following are some of the more obvious and striking difficulties:

Take any statement that may be formulated from the language of ver. 4, and much of the scripture quotations of vers. 5-13, considered as proof, is *prima facie*, partly *mal-apropos*, and the statement a non-sequitur, and they are partly not scripture at all. It is only by labored exegesis of the quotations, and of their context, and by invention of special canons of Old Testament interpretation to suit the emergencies of the case, that the point and fitness of the Author's appeal to scripture can be made to appear. As might be supposed, there is great falling out among expositors in this labor.

In ver. 5 the quotations are from Ps. ii. 7 and 2 Sam. vii. 14 (1 Chr. xvii. 13). It has been proved that ancient Jewish Rabbis regarded Ps. ii. as Messianic, and that later Jewish authorities only took opposite ground on account of the advantage the Messianic view gave Christians over them. But it does not appear that Jews ever understood that **my son** in these passages could refer only to the Messiah. It is obvious, in fact, that the language in 2 Sam. vii. 14 applies primarily to Solomon. Moreover, it is well known that angels, and even men are not unfrequently in the Old Testament called sons of God (comp., as to angels, Ps. xxix. 1; lxxxix. 7). Hence the canon of interpretation is devised: "That nowhere in the Old Testament is any *single* man or angel called 'Son of God,' or 'the Son of God,' or simply 'the Son.' It is therefore true that this name **בן** or *υἱός* does appertain to the exalted Jesus, as a personal name, in a way that it does not to any other being from among angels or men" (Del). But this canon would never have been thought of except for the exigencies of the present scripture regarded in the light we are considering. And it is right in the face of the fact that God does call Solomon His son. Certainly He does so to the apprehension of unsophisticated readers of 2 Sam. vii. 14. It seems that, were this a mistaken apprehension, our Author would be called on to show by what canon "My son" was to be understood of Christ. But so far is the Author from having such a notion, that he himself, in ver. 6, calls Christ the First-born, which implies other sons, and at ii. 10 he calls the redeemed: "sons," (*πολλοὺς υἱοὺς*) i. e., sons of God. Each is therefore a son, and God may say to each: "My son." How could the Author so write just after such a passage as our vers. 5-13, if the aim of that passage were to prove that only Christ has that more excellent name. If "no scrip-

it must be a plain meaning, lying on the surface and familiar to the readers. This, however, is nothing more than what is true of all language. That some of the language is confessedly Messianic need not mislead us to suppose that all is so, or even that the Author so regarded all of it. If he used scripture language at all in the way represented above, he would more likely than not weave in some that was familiarly known to be Messianic.

ture is of private interpretation," much more is it unallowable to warp all scripture to suit the interpretation of a unique passage.

In ver. 6 the language quoted is not found in the Hebrew scripture at all. The words are found only in the LXX., at Deut. xxxii. 43. The only other passage that might be claimed as the possible source of the quotation is Ps. xcvi. 7, which reads: "Worship Him all ye gods" (Elohim), where the LXX. have "angels" instead of "gods." But no one would think of the latter but for the textual difficulty of the former passage. Besides, in both passages, it is Jehovah that is to be worshiped. To meet this difficulty another canon is devised: "The writer proceeds on the general principle, that whenever the Old Testament speaks of a final and decisive advent and manifestation of Jehovah in the power and glory of the final judgment and salvation; whenever it speaks of a revelation of Jehovah which shall be the antitype and fulfillment of that typical one in the Mosaic time, of a self-presentation of Jehovah as manifested King over His own kingdom, there Jehovah is equivalent to Jesus Christ, for Christ is Jehovah manifested in the flesh," etc. (Del.) Here again a canon is invented for the special case, and a very intricate one. What havoc we would make with the interpretation of the Old Testament by the application of such a canon! And why may not we use it as well as the Author of this epistle? With von Hofmann (*Comm. on ver. 6*) we may exclaim: "If Jehovah is really always Christ, what remains of God the Father?" This view of the Author's fashion of reading his Old Testament, though reverent, cannot be regarded as practically better than Bleek's dishonoring explanation of this and other scriptural quotations, who ascribes the discrepancies to the Author's ignorance of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and acquaintance with only the Greek version of the LXX., which, *e. g.*, at ver. 10, led him to suppose that Christ is meant wherever he read *κύριος* = "Lord," in the LXX., because Christ was commonly so called in the Author's day. See the same view reiterated by Toy in his *Quotations in the New Testament*, 1884.

In vers. 8, 9, the words quoted from Ps. xlv. 6, 7, are not the words of God to another, but the words of the Psalmist addressed to the object of his worship, whom he entitles Elohim = God. Moreover, the words are one undivided passage, whereas, in our vers. 8, 9, they appear as two quotations conjoined by **and**, for which a special reason is again thought out, which we may omit to notice. But for the first difficulty, *viz.*, that the Psalmist addresses God, and

It may help to familiarize our minds with the method used by our Author in this dramatic passage, if we compare similar examples of representing dramatically such personal relations as are here illustrated. Such examples appear in the account of healing the centurion's servant, Matt. viii. 8 sqq., Luke vii. 8 sqq. (note the "I say" of the centurion and the *he saith* of our vers. 6, 7). Compare also the parable of the Servant (Luke xvii.

not God is the speaker, we have imputed to our Author still another canon of interpretation: "That he regards the whole contents of scripture as being the word and utterance of God Himself" (Del.), and this may apply to all the instances of *he saith* in our passage vers. 5-13. This canon has a broader application to our whole epistle, and not only to the special case, and differs thus from the preceding canons. But it is in the face of the Old Testament language, quoted ii. 6, 12; iii. 7; iv. 7. And, moreover, when Delitzsch comes to explain ii. 12, we find him resort to similar invention to explain how what was said by Isaiah of his own children may be understood as the Messiah speaking.

In vers. 10-12, the words as found in Ps. cii. 25-27 cannot, without violence, be construed as having been said to Christ, or with reference to Him. They are the words of an afflicted soul complaining and appealing to his God. But to serve the present case, we are called on to apply again the canon just given, and the Psalm must be made Messianic by understanding that: "The advent (*παρουσία*) of Jehovah, for which the Psalmist is praying, as one who carried in his heart the burden of the afflictions of Jerusalem and his exiled people, is an 'advent' already vouchsafed in the first coming of the Lord Jesus, though its glorious completion is still waited for." (Del.) According to that, what Psalm may not be Messianic?

Such are some of the glaring and insuperable difficulties that attend the common view, that in our vers. 5-13 our Author adduces Old Testament scripture as authority for some statement of ver. 4. If we were to go into labored exposition of the passages in question, in the way that Delitzsch, and von Hofmann do, who may be taken as the best examples of thorough work of the sort, we would be confronted with many more difficulties, and quite as great. And the view in question involves the necessity of such exegesis, with all its hardships, especially this hardship, that the results will certainly be as numerously different as the expositors. Moreover (and this alone seems decisive), it is manifest, that, did the Author use the scripture in question with the intent that this view imputes to him, he must have been as obscure to his first readers as to ourselves, and could only have been explained to them by a similar exegesis.

We must conclude, therefore, that *the error is in the view-point itself*, viz., in the assumption that the Author appeals to the Old Testament scripture as proof. It is better, with von Hofmann (*Schriftbeweis*, I. p. 150, and *Comm.*

7-9); and especially the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 17 sqq.)

In *illustration*, then, of the greater excellence of Christ as betokened by that inherited name Son, the Author appeals first to the obvious fact, not that angels are never called sons of God, which is not a fact,¹ but that angels are nowhere addressed *in that affectionate way* that a father uses toward a son, and which is proper where that relation actually exists. This the Author expresses in a way that assumes that the fact is self-evident, viz., he puts it interrogatively, in a way that anticipates but one reply.²

Ver. 5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again: I will be

on Hebrews, p. 70.) to take another view. In his *Schriftb.*, he says: "For us, all the Apostolic statements concerning Christ's being before the world and above the world, have their ground in Christ's statements concerning Himself, that He proceeded from God and came into the world, and again left the world and went to God. Herewith is explained the use that we see made of that passage in the Psalms [Ps. cii. 25-27, in our ver. 10 sqq.], which is not intended by the Author as proof of what he said of Jesus, but, like all the previously quoted passages, only serves the purpose of saying in scripture language what is true of Christ according to the Author's belief, and the belief he assumes in his readers."

The position we must adopt more absolutely than von Hofmann does. For he adds: "If Christ was before the world with God, then what is said of God as being before the world and above the world applies to Him." This, then, leads him to seek in the scripture passages quoted, and as understood in their original context, what is the truth that is applicable to Christ; which necessitates as much exegesis of the Old Testament scripture as the common view, with just the same sort of attending difficulties, if not as many. However skillfully he does his work, it certainly produces the conviction that our Author used scripture in a way quite unfamiliar to his readers, and that it was impossible for them to understand him.

We may add the reflection, that our verses 4-13 and ii. 5 sqq., have a most important bearing on the subject of the Christology of the Old Testament, and that the view-point we have been considering, with the principles of Old Testament interpretation it has originated, has done more to introduce confusion into that subject than any other thing. On other examples of similar use of scripture language, by the Apostle, viz., ii. 12, 13; x. 5, 38, see *in loc.*

¹ Comp. Ps. xxix. 1; lxxxix. 6, where the words rendered "ye mighty," (marg.: "sons of the mighty"), are correctly rendered by the LXX. "sons of God," and by these are meant angels.

² Comp. the exclamation of Peter (John vi. 28), "To whom shall we go," etc.

to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? The language used here is from Ps. ii. 7 and 2 Sam. vii. 14 (1 Chr. xxii. 13), and was familiarly understood to be Messianic. It is this fact that warrants the Author in using it in the self-evidential way he does. He repeats this manner of expression at ver. 13, in employing other language that was still more familiarly regarded as Messianic. The force of the appeal in our ver. 5, lies in the truth that God does so address the Messiah. With this the Apostle contrasts the representation of God's manner of addressing the angels:

Ver. 6. "**But, when he shall have again brought in the first-born into the [inhabited] world, he says: and let all the angels of God worship him.**" The language of ver. 6, *a*: **But when . . . world** is an indirect statement in the Author's own words. The language of ver 6, *b*: **And let . . . worship him** is from Deut. xxxii. 43, as the words are found in the LXX., but not in the Hebrew text. There is nothing in the original context of Moses' song that refers to the occasion to which the Author refers in ver. 6, *a*: nor does the exhortation there "to worship" propose any other object than God Himself. The occasion to which our Author refers is the second coming of Christ.¹ And this must explain why and in what sense he writes **the first-born** instead of "the Son." He that came into the world as **the Son**, will return to it as **the First-born**, because in the meanwhile there will have been born after Him "many sons,"² of which ii. 10-13 treats more fully. **The world** to which the Son will be introduced is here called **the inhabited world** (*οἰκουμένην*),³ and is mentioned again ii. 5, as "the world to come," and must mean what is amplified there, viz., a condition of the earth and its inhabitants wherein all things are to be subjected to Christ who has been crowned with honor and glory (ii. 7-9). On this occasion, as the Apostle represents, God says: **and let all the angels of God worship him.** He includes the **and** of the original passage in the LXX., because he would signify that, in addition to the worship that awaits the returning First-born on the part of the inhabitants

¹ Del., Alford, von Hof., etc.² So Iūn. and von Hof.³ Contrast x. 5.

of the earth, the angels also shall be called on to worship Him.¹ It seems inexplicable, at first, why the Author should bring in this reference to the second coming of Christ so abruptly. But we see that his main thought is to express the inferiority of the angels to the Son, and nothing could do so better than to represent them as worshipping Him. There is no scriptural intimation of their doing so except that which the Apostle elaborates at ii. 5-9. The fulfillment is to be when He comes again. The point with the Author is to state, in contrast with ver. 5 (*i. e.* in contrast with what God *does not* say to angels), *what He does say* of them, viz., let them all worship the First-born; and this necessitates his saying *when*. Thus the clause: **when he shall have again brought. . . world**, is parenthetical. The truth that the angels shall be subject to the Son does not rest on the scriptural language that is quoted, which, as a proof-text, has no such application. The readers of this epistle required no proof that angels would worship the returning First-born. That was part of the accepted belief.² It is, however, the Apostle's aim to represent not only the inferiority of the angels to Christ, but also *God's manner of treating them as inferior*. Thus he represents God as saying to them, or rather *of* them (which is a still more distant manner): **and let all the angels of God worship him**. The Apostle has no need of scripture proof that God says this. If the angels are to worship Christ, it will be because God says: let them worship Him. But wishing to represent this scriptural thought in a certain manner, he uses in a free way scriptural language that suits his purpose. We shall do better justice to the Apostle's manner of using scripture language when we shall have noticed how (*e.g.*, at ii. 6 sqq.; iii. 7 sqq.) he makes it plain enough when he means to appeal to Old Testament scripture as authority, and with what exactness he uses it then, and how independently of the version of the LXX.

We may add here the reflection that, with the view we have taken, the Apostle's use, in the present instance, of language that criticism discovers to be doubtful, if not spurious, involves no

¹ So von Hof.

² Comp. 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

important question touching what is genuine scripture. He simply uses scriptural language in the form familiar to his readers to express his own thought; just as many intelligent Christians now will continue to use the doxology of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 13), though fully aware that it is not genuine.

Extending his illustration, the Apostle contrasts God's manner towards angels and towards Christ in two more representations; towards angels (ver. 7) as ministers that God uses in administering the affairs of the material world, and who are such as He makes them for the use required; towards the Son (vers. 8-12) as the occupant of a throne that is God's throne, administering a moral world where He is to reign everlastingly with a fulness of joy that is the reward of His righteous sway.

Ver. 7. **And of the angels, indeed, he saith: Who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire; 8. but of the Son [he saith]: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and: The sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9. Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst iniquity, therefore, O God, thy God anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10. And: thou in the beginning, Lord, didst found the earth, and works of thy hands are the heavens; 11. they shall perish, but thou continuest; and as a garment they all shall wax old, 12. and as a mantle thou wilt change¹ them, and ²they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.**

The language used here is culled out of several passages of the Old Testament. That of ver. 7 from Ps. civ. 4. That of ver. 8 from Ps. xlv. 6, 7. That of ver. 10-12 from Ps. cii. 25-27. The freedom of this selection; the fact that it is all from the Psalms, *i. e.*, the most familiar scripture; the absence of express reference to it as authority, such as we find ii. 6; iii. 7; the liberty the Author takes with the language (*e. g.*, ascribing to God what is the language of the Psalmist, and in ver. 8 making two expressions of one by repeating the **and** of ver. 7); and his using language of Ps. cii., that is not Messianic, precisely as he does the clearly Messianic language of Ps. xlv.; all these circumstances constrain us to understand that the Author clothes

¹ Or **fold up**, *ἐλίσσει* W. and H.

² W. and H., add *ὡς ἱμάτιον*=**as a garment**.

his own thought in scripture language. It is his aim again, both to point to the actual difference between the Son and the angels, and to express it (dramatically) so as to represent a difference of God's manner towards each.

In reference to the angels (ver. 7), he represents God speaking *of* them, distantly, in the familiar words of the Psalm; that they are sometimes winds, sometimes a flaming fire, sometimes messengers (which is the meaning of the word angels), sometimes ministers. By this is not meant that angels are only material, impersonal things, or that such things as winds and fire are angels, as well as that personal spirits are such. We must suppose that the Apostle reflects here what the Jews believed: "that God gives His angels, when employing them to carry out His purposes in the sensible universe, elemental bodies, as it were, of wind and fire, as 'media' of manifestation."¹ By this he makes prominent the characteristics of *inferiority* and *mutability* in the angels.

The Apostle follows this with the representation of the *sovereignty and immutable greatness of the Son* (vers. 8-12), and of how God *addresses Him as His peer*. The period to which such a representation refers must be the same as stated ver. 6, viz., Christ's second coming. If the doctrinal statements of vers. 2, 3 were the accepted belief of his readers, the representation of our vers. 8-12, are the logical consequences of them, that need only the expression to command assent. Any other than scripture language to express them would be unworthy the theme. The Apostle naturally uses the scripture language most familiar to his readers, viz., the version of the LXX. He writes so well that comment is needless. It is obvious, moreover, that such quoted language does not demand, or even permit, that we should weigh each expression with the exactness we must observe in considering the Author's own language. In expressing one's self in quoted language, one "takes it in the block."

But it is worthy of notice that in ver. 8, the Apostle does not hesitate to write unequivocally **O God**, as addressed to the Son,

¹ Del. Comp., Lün., and references in both to Schoetgen and Wetstein.

in the vocative. And, as he weaves the quoted language together, this so involves ver. 9 that the same construction must be retained there, and we must read: **O God, thy God.** The application in vers. 10-12 of language originally addressed to God is in the same spirit. All of vers. 8-12, therefore, are most unequivocal Apostolic testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ. And this is additional reason for taking the doctrinal statements of vers. 2, 3, as we have done, in the most absolute sense. Moreover, as Apostolic testimony to this doctrine, it is far more exact and irrefragable in proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ, when we see that the thought, though clothed in scripture language, is really that of the Apostle himself. For if we receive it as Old Testament language, intended to adduce Old Testament thought, in proof of some statement of ver. 4, we find everything depends on whether the language in the original context really has the meaning or application that the Apostle thinks it has. Then everything that may be justly urged against the words (*e. g.*, Ps. cii. 25-27) having such an application tells against the present testimony to the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Just in proportion as one feels that the Author mistakes that application, he will feel that the Author may be charged with having mistaken the true doctrine of Christ.

The Apostle adds one more illustration. Using language of Ps. cx. 1, which was familiarly known to be Messianic, indeed more familiarly known in this way than any other passage of scripture, he puts the thought interrogatively, in that self-evidential way noticed in ver. 5.

Ver. 13. But of which of the angels hath he said at any time: Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?

The question anticipates only one answer, viz. a negative; and this negative demands attention to the contrary affirmative, that God did say this to the Son. He says it now. For now Christ is at the right hand of the Majesty on high (ver. 3).

The Apostle marks a difference in this appeal, compared with those that have preceded, not only by the interrogative affirmation, but also by the use of the perfect tense: **He hath said,**

which denotes, not only that the thing was said, but also that its effect continues. "No Psalm is so often referred to in the New Testament as this ex.; being quoted ten times: Matt. xxii. 41-46; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44; Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13; x. 13 (all quotations of Ps. cx. 1); and further, Heb. v. 6; vii. 17, 21 (quotations from Ps. cx. 4). Moreover, all those passages in the New Testament which speak of our Lord's session at the right hand of God have an intimate relation to this Psalm, which first gives this, its scriptural name, to that great divine fact of the new dispensation."¹

To this extended illustration of the "more excellent name" (ver. 4), the Apostle adds the statement of what is the place of angels. This he does in that interrogative and self-evidential way that he has twice used already (vers. 5, 13), and that we begin to notice is a marked trait of his style of composition.

Ver. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth for a service on account of them that should inherit salvation?

In affirming what he does here of angels with such emphasis on: **all**, it is obvious that other spheres of activity for them are not excluded; for the statement of ver. 7 precludes that notion, as it also requires us to think that angels do other things also than what is here described. Thus the Apostle can neither mean, that all angels are at the same time sent forth, or attending as ready to be sent forth, for the service mentioned here, nor that this sort of service is exclusively the object of their ministry. Moreover, it is improbable that the representation of our ver. 14 is intended as an additional illustration of the inferiority of angels to the Son. Such, indeed, is the common interpretation. But we must not overlook the fact that what is stated is in reality no proof of their inferiority, at least in the sense commonly supposed. For if we understand our ver. 14 to represent that the vocation of angels is to minister to those whom Christ saves, that is no more than Christ Himself did when on earth, and than He continues to do when ascended to heaven.² He indeed chiefly excels the angels in respect to us by ministering to the heirs of salvation more effectually. This ministry, then, can afford no

¹ Del.

² Comp. viii. 2.

ground of contrast between Christ and angels, but only a comparison of the *degree* of it. But even were the present statement to point to a service of angels that some way marked their humbler degree, we have already noticed that the text before us precludes our thinking that is all the service they perform. So that, humble as *this* service might be compared with what is represented of the Son, vers. 10–13, they have other services that are truly exalted. In short, we suppose the point of ver. 14 has been generally misapprehended. The Apostle's present representation relates to angels as they are noticed in the present comparison, viz., as agents of revelation speaking for God. Comparison is intended ; but as it has been expressed at ver. 4. The Son is better for us as agent of revelation than the angels. How this is so has been expressed (vers. 5–13), by showing that the Son is the favorite, the confidant, the peer of God ; all of which the angels *are not*. Now it is expressed by affirming what the angels *are*, that is, what they are as agents of revelation. The Apostle says, they are all of them such as he proceeds to describe, meaning that in this character they have one function, and, because angels are many and mighty, their functions will be unerringly and certainly discharged.

That the angels **are ministering spirits** has been expressed already ver. 7, where it has been stated (with a play on the word *πνεῦμα*, using it literally) that God makes them winds and a flaming fire, and that as such they are His ministers. All these notions are to be brought forward and combined with the present statement. Thus, in our ver. 14, when the angels are called ministering spirits, it is meant that *they minister to God*. Therefore, we are not to suppose the Apostle expresses here that they minister to the Son, as ver. 6, it is represented how they are to worship the Son. The latter event is referred to the future ; what is represented here is present (*εἰσὶν*—*ἀποστελλόμενα* ; “are” — “sent”). Nor may we suppose that the Apostle expresses that the angels minister to those to be saved, in a benignant sense. The expression of that notion requires a substantive of the person in the dative after the phrase *εἰς διακονίαν*, “for a service.”¹ (Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.)

¹ Comp. Bleek.

As ministering spirits serving God, and as a flame of fire,¹ the angels are sent forth, by which is meant what they are at present as charged with the execution of that word that they spoke as God's agents of revelation (ii. 2). These thoughts are resumed from ver. 7. What marks the progress of thought is the additional statement: **on account of them that should afterwards inherit salvation.** These words define the intent of the angelic ministry here referred to. **On account of** (*διὰ*, with accusative) expresses nothing as to what the service is, but only with reference to whom the service is done for God. Thus it is not expressed that they minister directly in the matter of salvation at all. What relation their service may have to salvation can only be inferred, as far as now expressed, from the revelation of which they are known to be the agents. This would lead us to think of the relation of the law of Moses to the grace of Jesus Christ.² But in the context (ii. 2) we actually find expressed this antithesis between their ministry and salvation; salvation is escape from the word spoken by angels. Thus the nearest interpretation of our ver. 14 is, that it intimates the same antithesis when it reminds the readers, that angels are now sent forth to do a service for God on account of those that are to inherit salvation.

In Rom. iii. 25 we have a statement that is kindred to our present one, both in construction and thought: "Whom God set forth a propitiation . . . to show His righteousness on account of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God." (*εἰς ἔνδοξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν κ. τ. λ.*). As for construction, the *διὰ τ. πάρεσιν* has the same relation to the *εἰς ἔνδοξιν*, that in our text the *διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κ. τ. λ.* has to *εἰς διακονίαν*. As for kindred thought, Rom. iii. 25 declares what the service of Christ was with reference to those that by transgression had actually incurred the penalty of the law. Our text declares, *mutatis mutandis*, what is the service of angels, the ministers of the broken law, with reference to those that should afterward be saved. One representation is but the other inverted.

With the notions thus identified agrees the expression: **those**

¹ Comp. ix. 27; xii. 29.

² John i. 17.

that should or those about (*μέλλοντας*) to inherit salvation. This represents the service of the angels as antecedent to that revelation that promises salvation. In short, the Apostle intimates here what he clearly expresses Gal. iii. 19–24, which is the passage most parallel to our context in reference to the doctrine of angels. There the ministry of angels is represented to be the communication of the law that “was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made;” and that, “before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed (*τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι*), so that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” What the Apostle says, in Galatians, of the law, he here intimates of the angels through whom the law was ordained. What he says, in Galatians, of the faith that should afterward be revealed, he says here of those that were afterward to have the faith and so inherit salvation. In the one case he speaks abstractly of law and faith; in the other he speaks concretely or personally of angels and saints.

This, then, is what angels are as the agents of revelation that have spoken a word from God. They are ministering spirits representing the justice of that law that was spoken by them. Their service has respect to those that are to inherit salvation, but it is only as the law is said to do the same. The direction and effectiveness of that service find immediate expression in the closely connected words that follow (ii. 1–3), which interpret the sense in which our ver. 14 is said, and confirm the view now presented.

As with the present verse the Apostle concludes the contrast between the Son and angels as agents of revelation from God, we may pause for some reflections on what appears. The statement of our ver. 14 might have been made in closest connection with ver. 4. Yet how much the thought that would thus have been expressed has gained by the representations that have intervened! The angels have not been lowered in dignity. But the Son appears gloriously transcending them all as the intimate confidant and peer of God. God gives him a righteous

kingdom that comprehends earth and heaven, and is to be everlasting. In token of this he sits at God's right hand till the kingdom is established without an enemy to oppose him. All this makes him better as an agent of revelation to us than the angels, and the measure of that betterness is his more excellent name. And finally it appears, that this greater excellence is due to a distinction or difference as to quality in that service *he* undertakes as revealer, and the services of angels. The service of angels is as a flame of fire ; his is salvation from that. Thus, as we have seen, the "greater excellence" (ver. 4) expresses (*διασφοδότερον*) something not only greater in degree but also different in kind. It is this double excellence that makes the Son so much better than the angels as one to speak to us from God.

Here, then, we may notice already the sharp edge of the wedge entered that is to divide between the old and the new dispensations. By successive blows the Apostle is about to drive it in further, till the division is complete. But before he drives it further, he pauses to give an admonition appropriate to the situation as already presented.

We may observe at this point, that we have already encountered in our epistle one of the many representations that breathe the distinctive spirit of the Apostle Paul's teaching. It has been quite the fashion of late to emphasize the differences between our Author and the recognized epistles of Paul. As a good representative, we may quote Farrar¹ on a point regarding which we are now in a position to form an opinion of our own, and shall see still more clearly when we have examined the next following verses (ii. 1-4) :

"To St. Paul, Judaism was represented by a law which enforced, by one universal menace, its impossible exactions ; it was a dispensation of wrath which revealed to man that he was naturally under the curse of God. Christianity, on the other hand, was represented by a deliverance, a reconciliation, a free grace, which men were enforced to seek as a refuge from a doom which their troubled conscience declared to be deserved. This epistle views the two religions under an aspect entirely different.

¹ Early days, etc. chap. xvi.

It sees in Judaism *not so much a law as a system of worship*, of which Christianity was the antitype and fulfillment. Both writers arrive at the same conclusion, but they do so by different routes, and from different premises. St. Paul represents Mosaism as a cancelled servitude; this writer as an incomplete satisfaction." This representation, which runs on further than we care to quote, in ringing antitheses, is as little justified in general, as it is in the particular that falls under our notice in the present context. In speaking of the ministry of angels, we observe that our Author is really speaking of the law. At x. 28, dealing with the same subject, and reiterating, from the point of view there attained, the same admonition that we must next examine (ii. 1, 2), he exchanges the expression "the word spoken by angels" for "the law of Moses."¹ He means in our context the same thing that is discoursed on in Romans and Galatians as the law of Moses. We may even adopt the language of the above quotation, as it characterizes Paul's manner of viewing the law and salvation, as the preface to the words of our Author that we are now to consider. "He represents the ministry of angels as one universal menace enforcing impossible exactions; as a dispensation of wrath that revealed to the readers that they were under the curse of God. The ministry of Christ, on the other hand, is a salvation, a deliverance² which the heirs of salvation are forced to seek as a refuge from a doom which their troubled consciences declare to be deserved."

We are now to see why the Apostle has dwelt so fully on the superiority of the Son compared with the prophets, and especially with angels. It appears in the application he proceeds to make.

II. 1. For this reason we must more abundantly give heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away [from them.]

The immediate reference of: **for this reason**, is to what has been represented i. 14. This is evident of itself as soon as we apprehend the point of what is stated there, and detect, as we have done, its magnitude and the consequences involved. It is because all this has been missed that the reference of: "for this

¹ Comp. vii. 12, 19; x. 1. ² Comp. ix. 12, 15, on *λύτρωσις* and *ἀπολύτρωσις* = "deliverance."

reason" has usually been extended to all the foregoing context of chap. i., especially from ver. 4. By : **the things that were heard**, is meant the same that has been expressed by : "God spake unto us in his Son" (i. 2), denoting, however, that what was spoken has also been heard. The following ver. 3, with i. 14, shows that the word of salvation is meant. For this the Apostle claims **more abundant heed**, and that as a necessity.¹ He says : **we must**; and the first person plural means himself and readers and all concerned; in other words, the Hebrews that were the special subjects of divine revelation, as is denoted by the same first person plural, i. 2. By : **more abundantly**, is denoted a comparison. But it is not more earnest heed than had been given to previous revelation; ² nor more than might have been needed had the present revelation come by an agent not superior to previous agents.³ There is progress in the thought to an additional motive for hearing, derived from what has been represented of the service of angels. The meaning is : *more abundant heed than might have been needful if the angels had not been charged with such a service.*

The present need of hearing well is enforced, in the first place, by the consideration : **last haply we drift away** from the things spoken. The advantage to be had from what was spoken might be forfeited by "drifting by" and missing the mark. And there was danger of making such a miss, unless one gave very great heed, and of failing of refuge from an impending storm "as a ship that in stress of weather fails to make its haven."⁴

As his readers seemed little sensible, both of the danger of drifting by, and of the dreadful consequences, the Apostle proceeds to impress on their minds the urgent need he has just represented.

Ver. 2. **For if the word spoken through angels became steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 a, how shall we escape, having neglected so great salvation?**

¹ ὑπείλιν, dicit obligationem; δεῖ, urgens periculum. Bengel.

² So Chrysostom, Pareus, etc. ³ So Hammond, de Wette, Lün., Del. and most.

⁴ Luther.

The mention of **the word spoken through angels** shows plainly in what light the Apostle has instituted the comparison between the Son and them. It is, as we have assumed, because both are agents of a revelation from God. In pointing his admonition he describes the chief, or at least the characteristic traits of their agency in this matter, and this, be it noted, *describes that service for which they are sent forth as stated i. 14.* Indirectly, also, the description intimates what was the character of "the word spoken through angels." To begin with this latter thought, the Apostle intimates of their word, that its chief characteristics were prohibitions and commands; for this is implied in the expressions: **transgressions and disobedience.** Such was the chief characteristic of the law communicated by Moses at Sinai, which, as we have already noted, the Jews believed came through the agency of angels. Such, moreover, is the aspect in which the law is uniformly presented in the New Testament. The Apostle, also, in expressly stating that such "transgressions and disobedience received a just recompense of reward," and further on again (iii. 7 sqq.) by recurring evidently to the same fact, shows that he means the *punitive judgments* that were inflicted during the wanderings in the wilderness, and others like them. From all this it appears, that, as has been noted already, the Apostle means by "the word spoken through angels," the same law of Moses that is discoursed on in Romans and Galatians. The mention of punishment here, along with the word they spoke, intimates that the visitation of merited punishment is something with which the angels are charged; that is, that having spoken the word, they are charged with executing it. This is the service on which "they are sent forth on account of them that are to inherit salvation." Not on account of these exclusively, of course; but still on their account, in the same sense as the law which is on account of transgressors, is also a tutor to lead to Christ them that are to be saved. By calling the punishments a **just recompense of reward** (a full-sounding phrase, and a favorite one in this epistle and peculiar to it; comp. x. 35; xi. 26), the Apostle describes them as given in full measure, and intimates that, as **just** (ἐνδικον), they are inevitable, and the only thing to be looked

for from that quarter. The word then spoken, he says, **became steadfast**. This means more than that it *was* steadfast, or that it became steadfast by reason of the way in which it was communicated, viz., through angels, such great authority. "It remained," says the Apostle, "in force and steadfast, as gradually appeared, in that it was not transgressed with impunity."¹

Having represented this most characteristic thing about the law of Moses, or, in other words, about the service of angels, the Apostle draws the inference in ver. 3. **How shall we escape?** he says. By this he does not intend a comparison of a *minore ad majus*,² and the **How** is not equivalent to "How much more." At x. 20, and xii. 25, the Apostle makes this comparison, which has influenced most readers to understand him in the same way here. But the distinctness of his "How much more" used there is proof that he would have used the same expression here, had he meant the same comparison. But he says simply : **How shall we escape**. This **How**, *i. e.*, "how is it possible," derives its force from the representation of ver. 2, which is its proper premise. The word spoken by angels, in other words, the law of Moses, being such as there described, presents only the notion of something that condemns. Its force and steadfastness had appeared in punitive dispensations. How, when subjected only to that law, could they escape such visitations of its just recompense as had already been experienced? How shall **we** escape, says the Apostle, with an emphasis on : **we**, that was peculiarly appropriate in a discourse of a Jew, directed exclusively to Jews that were under the law, and were the descendants of the very ones that had experienced the just punishments referred to. With reference to "the word spoken by angels," then, the Author treats the situation of those that had only that revelation, as a state of condemnation, and that the one thing of interest remaining was, how to escape.³ It is this moves him, in the following clause,

¹ So von Hof.

² Against Lün., Alford, Davidson, etc.

³ Comp. Gal. iii., 10 sqq., and Heb. ix. 15. This against Moulton, in the Handy Commentary, *in loc.*, who, while owning this obvious interpretation says: In a different context these words might naturally mean this. Here, however, they mean something totally different.

and all the present context (comp. i. 14), to refer to the word spoken by the Son under the name **salvation**. Such escape can only be by a salvation. That word, the Apostle affirms indirectly, brings salvation for this situation. The Apostle's question in full, is: **How shall we escape having neglected so great salvation? Having neglected, i. e., "after neglecting"** (aorist participle), presents for consideration the situation after one has neglected, or in the words of ver. 1, after one has given so little heed to the things that were spoken as to have drifted by them and missed what they offer. The Author recurs to this thought again at iii. 7-19; vi: 4-8, x. 26, 27, giving it a more intense expression, while at x. 28, 29; xii. 25, he repeats the warning of our vers. 2, 3, in the intenser form of a "how much more," or of reasoning *a minore ad majus*.¹

¹ As a side light to the Author's manner of pressing his subject on his Jewish readers, we may compare the manner of other inspired speakers in preaching the gospel to the same class, and to Paul's own manner elsewhere. A remarkable correspondence appears from this investigation, and one that justifies us in understanding that *such was the one, characteristic way of approaching the Jews with the gospel*.

John Baptist, sounded the key-note when he said: "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come," Matt. iii. 7; Luke iii: 7. And he intimates plainly, that the wrath was then impending: "Even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees;" and, that, whether it would do its destroying work or not, depended on how they received the Messiah, whose forerunner he was: "whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." This may be taken as the Baptist's own amplification of his briefer warning: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. iii. 2.

When Jesus began to preach, He used the same brief warning, Matt. iii. 17, and with the same meaning. As He gradually amplifies the meaning of the warning, it appears that the impending judgment was that national calamity, viz., the rejection of the chosen people, of which the central and most appalling feature was the destruction of Jerusalem. This appears in the warning upon the occasion of Galilean's slain at their very sacrifices by Pilate, and of others crushed by the tower of Siloam, (Luke xiii. 1-5), where His words: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," intimate, too truthfully, the horrors of the fall of Jerusalem, and the destruction that overtook the Jews in the temple itself, and in the very act of sacrifice. And the succeeding parable of the fig-tree explains the ground of the judgment. But it is in the closing days of His ministry, and in full view of His approaching death, by which, in

Paul says : **so great salvation**, with double emphasis, viz., on the **salvation**, and the fact that it is **so great**. He has mentioned the **salvation** already, i. 14, and repeating the mention of it, he calls attention to its character : *and such a salvation!* This leads him to describe it in a way to set forth its admirable character. In doing this, he points some contrasts that show its fitness to be a salvation from the word spoken by angels, and to illustrate how it (as a word spoken) is a better revelation than the word spoken by angels. Thus we have a transition from the previous aprioral argument that it *must be* a better revelation because of the better agent.

Paul points to some outward traits that illustrates the admirable nature of "the word that was heard."

Ver. 3. *b.* Which [salvation] having taken a beginning of

rejecting Him, the Jews filled up the measure of their iniquity, that Christ predicts this judgment in the plainest language. This appears in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, and its sentence: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men," Matt. xxi. 41; and again in the parable of the marriage of the King's son; "But the King was wroth; and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city," Matt. xxii. 7. And finally, in the discourse on the Mount of Olives, He describes the now inevitable ruin with even the detail and graphic power of the historian. "Then shall be great tribulation," said He, "such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. xxiv. 21.

With these words still ringing in their ears, the Apostles begin in their turn to preach the gospel; and the first audience is the same, viz., the Jews. Instantly they take up the same warning, and press their hearers to accept deliverance by Christ, or expect their doom. It appears in the conclusion of Peter's first sermon; and it is to be noted that he does it with appeal to the same prophetic scripture that the Author uses in our chap. i. 13, and which leads him up to the warning of our text, ii. 1-4: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Acts ii. 34-36. And when the Jewish multitude were thereupon "pricked in their heart," the point that gave anguish to their hearts was the apprehension of divine judgment plainly foretold and richly merited; merited not only by their rejection of Christ, but by a long course of similar rebellion against God of which this was but the crowning act. Comp. Matt. xxiii. 29-36. And their anxious enquiry: **What shall we do** is equivalent to the: **How shall we escape**, of our text.

The warning we are considering appears further on the same occasion in

being spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 4. God bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.

In this mention of the form and manner of imparting the revelation through Christ, the Apostle reiterates that it was spoken by the Son. But as this thought has been sufficiently elaborated, he mentions it now without emphasis, in order the more to emphasize the additional traits that he mentions. In the words before us he calls Christ **the Lord**, a designation he uses only twice again in this epistle.¹ To this, he may be influenced here by the representations he has just made, i. 10-12, wherein the Son appears addressed by that title. This reference greatly magnifies the importance of "the things that were heard,"

Peter's words: "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," Acts iii. 40. A crooked generation is one doomed to divine wrath and destruction, (comp. Deut. xxxii. 5, 15-26). And such was that generation of the Jews. "Save yourselves," to Peter's hearers, meant salvation from that impending doom. And note again the correspondence of this expression to the: **great salvation** of our text.

Again this warning of destruction appears in the second recorded sermon of Peter, Acts iii. 22 sqq., where, having quoted the language of Moses referring to Christ, he says: "And it shall be, that every soul, which shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." And let it be noted, that the judgment is represented as the same in kind as those that came upon Israel in the wilderness, and to which our Author appeals in our passage, and also makes other appeals further on in our epistle (comp. iii. 7-19; vi. 4-8).

This same warning is the key-note of Stephen's dying speech to the rulers of the Jews. It had been the burden of that powerful preaching that made him so obnoxious to them, as appears in the corrupt evidence of suborned witnesses who testified: "We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us," Acts vi. 14. In his dying address itself, we have, what may be taken as an extended comment on the words of our passage: "The word spoken through angels became steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward," as they are interpreted above. The climax of his address, when he was cut short by the wrath of his hearers, Acts vii. 51, 52, are almost a reiteration of the words of Christ, Matt. xxiii. 31-36, while ver. 53, "ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not," is as nearly like our verse 2.

¹ vii. 14; xiii. 20.

seeing that the speaker was no less than the Lord that made earth and heaven. Or he may be influenced to use this title because he mentions Christ here in connection with His Apostles, and others whom He commissioned to preach the gospel, and such was the customary title. It may be proper to ascribe to both of these considerations their influence.

But the peculiar phrase by which the Apostle expresses Christ's part in speaking the word of salvation challenges attention. The salvation took a beginning of being spoken through the Lord. Mark entitles his whole book: "Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ."¹ Properly understood, this means: all that which he recounts was the beginning of the gospel. Luke, in the preface to his book of the gospel, calls it "a narrative concerning those matters delivered by those who *from the beginning*

The mantle of Stephen fell on Saul of Tarsus, that held the mantels of those that stoned Stephen. In his first recorded sermon (and the only recorded sermon of Paul's to a purely Jewish audience), he enforces the offer of the gospel at the conclusion of his address in these words: "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, if we declare it unto you." Acts xiii. 40, 41. In these words we find a close correspondence to our passage, and the cognate, x. 26-31, even to the reference of the "therefore" to the foregoing context of Acts xiii. 38, 39.

Paul repeats the same manner of pressing Jesus on the Jews, in that conference he had with a large representation of the Jews resident in Rome (see Acts xxviii. 23-28), concluding his appeal with what may be called the sternest and most uncompromising language of all scripture, quoting Isa. vi. 9, 10. It is to be noted, however, by comparison of Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; and John xii. 40, that he followed in this, the example of Christ's teaching. In fact, the language in question: "By hearing, ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand, . . . lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them," may be said to be a Jew's text, primarily and purely for Jews, and to be used for Gentiles, only by proper adaptation.

The severity, and uncompromising roughness of this manner of pressing the Jews with the gospel does not appear in the scriptural examples of preaching to Gentiles. It was justified, not only, but demanded in their case, because of their previous relation to God, and their long preparation for the gospel, and because of the urgency of the crisis. (Comp. below, on v. 12, "when, on account of the time.") The judgment impended. As our Author says: "And exhort so much the more as ye see the day approaches." x. 25.

¹ See J. A. Alexander on Mark i. 1.

were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." And in Acts i. 1, 2, he describes the same book as having been written: "about all things that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach until the day in which He was received up. Also in vi. 1,¹ we find our Author uses the expression: "the word of *the beginning of Christ*." We notice in these citations a custom of regarding and speaking of the presence of Christ on earth, and of His personal ministry, as the beginning of the gospel, and even as the beginning of Christ's own doing and teaching. Thus, when the Apostle, i. 1, says that God finally spoke in a Son, we see now that he did not mean, and would not be understood by his readers to mean, that "the things that were heard," *i.e.*, when God so spoke, were from Christ personally on earth and from Him alone. It was the common understanding of Apostolic times to understand far more, *viz.*, that from Christ's commissioned "ministers of the word" were to be received this word of revelation. Hence what they preached was called "the word of God" and "the word of the Lord."² Luke, in Acts i. 1-5, represents this in very plain words. The Apostle and others were to be endowed by the Holy Spirit to continue the revelation in which "God spoke to us in a Son." Much more to the same effect, and equally plain,

It is expedient to confine the present discussion here, and simply refer to passages that present matter bearing on the same subject. (See Rom. ii. 5-9; ix. 21, 22; xi. 8, 25; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16; v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 1-12). To represent that bearing would involve very much space in order to adjust what might be represented with a proper account of the many divergent exegetical views.

Enough has been given, however, to show, as remarked above, that one characteristic manner marked the Apostolic practice in pressing the gospel on the Jews. It treated them as exposed to divine judgment, under the terms and conditions of the revelation already given, particularly, of the law of Moses. That calamity was near, and the situation was one which, if not helped, left nothing to be expected but a "fearful reception of judgment and of fiery zeal a-coming to devour the opposers" of the gospel. Heb. x. 27.

As in the present epistle Paul wrote to Jews, the matter now represented may be assumed to have had a determining influence in what he says; and the modern reader must allow it a large influence in his effort to put himself in the place of the original readers of the epistle, so that he may understand as they understood.

¹ Comp. at vi. 1.

² *e. g.* Acts iv. 31; vi. 2, 7; vii. 25; xiii. 5, 7, 48, 49.

might be appealed to in the New Testament. The foregoing citations, however, appear the most apposite because they are expressions of contemporary writers, not reporting the sayings of the past, but reflecting the mode of expression current in their own times, when they wrote. The Apostle's expression that we are considering, though peculiar, and commonly apprehended to mean less than it does, is, as we have said, not emphatic; it refers simply to Christ's personal ministry of the gospel in terms and with the view of it that was commonly received.

What the Apostle emphasizes here is expressed in the words: **was confirmed to us by them that heard.**¹ This refers to the

¹ The Apostle says: **was confirmed to us.** Important inferences as to the Author of this epistle, and as to the time of its writing, and as to its readers, have been made from this: **us.** As to the Author, it has been inferred that no Apostle could have written it; least of all Paul (Farrar, *in loc.*, etc., chap. xvii.; Davidson; Moulton, in Handy Comm., etc.), who in his epistle to the Galatians and elsewhere, is so particular about vindicating his apostleship, and maintaining that he received his revelation from Christ Himself, and not by means of others. (So Lün., Del.; comp. Gal. i. 1, 11, 12.) But if this epistle was written for Hebrews exclusively, and by a Hebrew, there is nothing to justify this inference, even against Paul's authorship. He speaks here just as he does in i. 1, and as he did in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia: "Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, *to us* is the word of this salvation sent forth," Acts xiii. 26. But it is urged, that Paul would not rank himself among those to whom that truth "was confirmed by those that heard," but would claim himself to be one of those that heard. (So Lün., Del.) Yet in that same address just referred to, Paul, speaking to Hebrews exclusively, said: "But God raised him from the dead; and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, *who are now his witnesses unto the people.* And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto *our* children in that he raised up Jesus," Acts xiii. 30-33. (Comp. Kay, in (Speaker's) Bible Comm., Introd. iii., Sect. 3, § iii.). Here are the very traits that are supposed to be convincing proof that Paul could not have written our text, Heb. ii. 3, 4. We have the first person plural, and we have the appeal to witnesses of Christ, with no reference to himself as one of them. It is the more remarkable, because the particular testimony referred to is, that Jesus was raised up from the dead, and that was the one great historical fact concerning Jesus of which Paul was also a witness. That remarkable address of Paul's, in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, is very instructive, when compared with this epistle. Its concluding words, vers. 38-41, are an epitome of the chief doctrine of this epistle, and contain the same warning that is given in the text we are studying, and that is reiterated, again and again, in stronger

Apostles and others that authoritatively preached the gospel. The emphatic thought is expressed in the word translated **confirmed**, which is the verbal form of the adjective translated "steadfast" in ver 2. The Apostle expresses that this "salvation" became **steadfast** to those to whom God spoke it, as well as did "the word spoken by angels." The antithesis will appear if we translate: "**which [salvation] taking a beginning of being spoken through the Lord, was made steadfast to us by those that heard.**" The thought is completed by what is added in ver. 4, in close connection.

terms, as the Author proceeds. But this fact appears in the comparison, viz., that, when Paul addressed an exclusively Jewish gathering, his manner *was different* from what it was when addressing Gentiles. Comp. Acts xxii. 18. That difference appears as plainly in the brief address in the synagogue (the only one of the kind fully reported) as in this long epistle. While it does not touch the question of difference, or as others will have it, discrepancy in doctrine, who may say what must be the limit of that difference? The differences between the manner of this epistle and, say, that to the Romans, are many; but as to doctrine, while some things have not the prominence here that they have there, discrepancy there is none. The objection to Paul's authorship that we have been considering has no force.

The inference *as to the time of writing this epistle* is, that the clause: "was confirmed unto us by those that heard," implies that the writer, as well as his readers, belonged to a second generation of Christians (Lün.). The citation from Acts xiii. 30-33, just given above, shows how little that inference is justified. The lapse of even a few years of spreading the gospel would be enough to make it improper to say of the Apostles to a Christian company of some standing: "who are now his witnesses," and would require instead an aoristic form of expression like our Heb. ii. 3. Besides (as von Hofmann replies), how could those that heard the witnesses of Christ belong to a different generation from the latter?

The inference *as to the readers of this epistle* from the words: "was confirmed unto us" is, that the Apostle wrote to Christians who did not see and hear the Lord while He was on earth; therefore, his readers were not Christians in Palestine. (So von Hof.) If there were any force in this objection, why should the Lord Jesus say, that His disciples were to be witnesses, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, *beginning from Jerusalem?* (Luke xxix. 47, 48; comp. Acts i. 8). And why did Peter, at a time when he had little idea of testifying to any but Jews in Palestine, promote the election of Matthias to be a witness with the other Apostles of the resurrection? (Acts i. 22). And why did he say: And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem. (Acts x. 39). The inference is obviously incorrect.

In ver. 4 the Apostle emphasizes how that salvation was imparted by those that heard. It was in a way that excluded all uncertainty, in that, when those who heard the Son began to impart in turn the salvation to others, God attended them with His testimony to the truth of what they taught. This testimony of God was by signs and wonders and manifold powers, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his own will. The qualifying phrase: according to his own will, applies only to: distributions of the Holy Spirit,¹ and not to all or any other of the particulars that precede that, and is intended to denote, not only that these distributions proceeded from the free grace of God, but that they were in great variety as to their nature and degree, and in great abundance.² What is referred to is primarily the miraculous manifestations that attended the preaching of the Apostles, and were the proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit; and then the *charismata* generally.³

Thus the Apostle has shown, that what God spoke through the Son *must be* a greater and better revelation for those that had it than what was spoken by angels, because of the superior excellence of the Son as an agent of revelation (i. 1-14). Thus far he uses an aprioral method.

To the admonition, that proportionate heed should be given to that revelation (ii. 1), and with the purpose of enforcing that admonition, he has added still other considerations, viz., the mode in which it was imparted and confirmed, proving that the revelation is greater and better. While the word spoken by angels

As the text before us is regarded as one of the clearest intimations in our epistle relative to the inferences just noticed, it deserves the attention we have given it. By disposing of it, we have disposed of many that are urged against Paul's authorship. We may note on the other hand, that Delitzsch, who has much to offer against the view that Paul is the author, admits that our phrase: "was confirmed to us" is quite in Paul's style; two of his modes of expression are combined in it: (1) *eis*, = "to," of them to whom the preaching of the gospel was addressed, and to whom it came (1 Thess. i. 5; comp. 2 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 25; 1 Pet. i. 25); (2) *βεβαιῶν* = "to confirm," of the preaching of the gospel in demonstration of the spirit and of power (1 Cor. i. 6; Phil. i. 7).

¹ So Lün., Alford, and many others.

² So Lün.

³ Acts ii. 1-4; iv. 31; x. 44; 1 Cor. xii. 4-11.

became steadfast by the dreadful agency of divine judgments, the word spoken by the Son was made steadfast simultaneously with its utterance by the demonstration of God Himself by His Holy Spirit. Not only the convincing way, but the merciful way of sending forth and establishing this salvation makes it so admirable. So great a salvation must be the only salvation. Neglecting it, must leave no escape from the consequence of transgression and disobedience.¹

Having represented the urgency of the situation that requires his readers to escape from the word spoken by angels, in other words, from the inevitable consequences of transgression and disobedience of that word, and having pointed to the gospel of Christ as the only salvation, in terms that display the greatness of it, *the Apostle proceeds to represent how there comes to be such a salvation, i.e., a dispensation that is escape from the foregoing dispensation revealed by the agency of angels.*

Ver. 5. **For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, of which we speak.** Such is the Author's proposition. And, with the proof following, it is the first blow given to the entering wedge that is to divide the old from the new revelation. The subject of the verb **subjected** is God, mentioned in ver. 4 as participating actively in the revelation of the gospel, and imparting to it the character of an express and particular revelation. **For** connects with : **salvation**, ver. 3, and the whole attending representation of it as very great.² The mention of **angels** is because the Author continues the contemplation of Christ, as an agent of revelation in relation to those antecedent agents, the angels, and of his word in relation to theirs. The negative affirmation of something **not subjected to angels** implies something that was subjected, and something obvious. What was subjected to them was not this world.³ It refers to the situation represented, i. 14 ; ii. 2, which evidently does represent a ministration committed to angels, and a state of things subjected to their ministry (i. 14). The time referred to by : **subjected** (aorist) is when the angels by divine commission spoke their word.

¹ Comp. x. 26.

² So von Hof.

³ So Davidson.

The world to come (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν = the world that should afterwards come) represents in other words the same notion as i. 14, "those that should afterwards inherit salvation." The word for **world** (οἰκουμένη) means an inhabited world (comp. on i. 6); and the world now mentioned is made up of the heirs of salvation. It would more precisely render the meaning here to translate: **the world that should afterwards be**. For the meaning is, that when God subjected to angels something wherein they were to be agents, He did not subject to them the world that should afterwards be, of which the Apostle speaks; in other words, a world that was *future with respect to their word of revelation and their consequent ministration*. The rendering: **the world to come**, is inexact, because it seems to express futurity only with respect to this writing of the Apostle; which is the notion most commonly entertained of it. It was future then; it is future still. But it was future also when God spoke by angels; and that, not simply historically so, but as something foreordained of God. This truth regarding the world to come is further implied in the representations of the following vers. 6-9, where the immediate purpose of the Author is to represent that the world to come *was* subjected to Christ. This must be borne in mind as the meaning when the expression: **world to come** is used in the following pages. **Of which we speak**, says the Apostle, in the first person plural, meaning himself, as he evidently does in other places in our epistle (comp. v. 11; vi. 9, 11; xiii. 18). By saying: **we speak**, in the present tense, he means the context immediately preceding, wherein he speaks of the great salvation, and the verses before us, wherein he continues to speak of the same subject. As spoken by the Lord and confirmed by those that heard Him, the great salvation proclaimed that world to come. And the Author, in urging that salvation as the way of escape, and thus calling on men to become heirs of salvation to come, is speaking of a world to come. In denying that this world to come was subjected to angels, the Author does not imply that the present world *was* subjected to them, as some have inferred,¹ and thereon constructed a theory of angelic dominion.

¹ e. g., Davidson.

Nor, indeed, that any *inhabited world* was subjected to them. The context admits of no inference beyond that stated above. But in denying that the world to come was subjected to them, the Author does mean that it was subjected to some one. That meaning he proceeds to unfold.

Vers. 6-8 a. But one somewhere testified, saying: What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or a son of man, that thou visitest him? 7. Thou madest him a little lower than angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor; 8 a. thou didst subject all things under his feet.

The Author appeals to words found Ps. viii. 4-6. The genuine text omits part of the words of the passage,¹ viz. "Thou madest him have dominion over the works of thy hands," ver. 6 a. The Apostle, no doubt, freely uses as much as suits his purpose. The indefiniteness of the terms **one** and **somewhere** need occasion no difficulty, and scarcely calls for remark. It has been observed that Philo uses the same: **somewhere** in quoting scripture. By: **one somewhere** "is intimated that it is immaterial to the present purpose who said this or where it was to be found, but that it is quoted as the expression of a man, yet, of course, such as has the force of a saying of scripture."² Or, with Chrysostom, we may say: "It is not meant either to hide or to reveal the one that testifies, but indicates the source as well known, and the readers as well versed in scripture." Prefacing the quotation with: **one testifies somewhere**, makes a distinct appeal to what is quoted, as authoritative. What is said is a matter of testimony, and that, scripture testimony. Moreover, by considering the words in the way of exposition (8 b) and of comment (8 c) and of application (9) the Author distinctly treats them as scriptural proof of what he represents. All this calls for special attention, and for comparison with his manner of using scriptural language in i. 5-13. (Comp. ii. 12, 13). It shows that the Author knows how to make it plain that his intention is to appeal to scripture, and that we may expect this of him when he does so, as we do of others. And when, as in i. 5 sqq. he gives no such intimation, we may understand him in the way that has been there explained.

¹ So Tisch., L., Tr., Westc. and Hort.

² von Hof.

The important part of the present quotation is that contained in vers. 7, 8 a, as the following context shows by dwelling only on that. What precedes expresses wonder that God should bestow so much regard on one who in his own estimation as a man, one of the race, is so insignificant. What that regard is, is expressed in the description of what God has done for man. That description affords the Author proof of what he has affirmed in ver. 5, viz., that the world to come was not subjected to angels. The description represents what is stated of the original work of creation, Gen. i. 26, 28; and the Psalmist must be understood as referring to that. It is natural to ask: why does our Author not appeal to that passage instead of to the Psalm? In respect to what was subjected, and that it was subjected to man, the Psalm says no more than Gen. i. 26, 28, except to pronounce, that by that ordinance man was crowned with glory and honor. As such, the testimony of the Psalm is secondary, and the original decree would seem to suit the purpose of our Author better. Another, say the Apostle himself, could testify to as much as this on the authority of scripture, as well as the Psalmist, and could say, too, that thus man was crowned with glory and honor.

It must be something he finds in the Psalm that is not in the original decree, that makes the Psalmist's testimony more suitable for the Apostle's purpose. That something is the mention of angels, which bears on his proposition ver. 5. He finds in that the express affirmation of a distinction between angels and man; of man having a rank and glory all his own; and of all things being subjected to man, and not to angels. This is the point of the quotation; and it is admirably to the point. As scripture proof, it is complete. It extends to this: it breaks down the assumption that everything relating to human affairs is subjected to angels; and it shows that man has a distinct rank and sphere of his own, and that it is such as crowns him with glory and honor in no way dependent on angels nor related to them.

With this understanding of the scope of the Author's appeal to the scripture in question, the earnest debate among commentators¹ about the meaning of ver. 7 a, *ἐλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι*

¹ See Davidson.

παρ' ἀγγέλλους, becomes insignificant. The common translation given above is best sustained ; and also the common understanding, that it expresses how man is inferior in creation to angels, yet only a little inferior.¹ But whichever of the debated senses is true, the distinction between angels and men remains, and that is the point emphasized, with the view of showing that to the one, viz., man, is given a dominion and glory that is not subjected to the other.

Moreover, the view now presented of the Author's appeal to Ps. viii., relieves us of the difficulty commonly felt about the Psalm having a Messianic reference. Much ingenuity has been expended by commentators to justify what they suppose the Author believed, viz., that the Psalm spoke of the Messiah. Delitzsch, *in loc.*, may be taken as an example. He expresses, however, the difficulty of the undertaking, when he says : "And yet this Psalm has less of a *Messianic appearance* than almost any ; nor has it, so far as we know, ever been recognized as a Messianic Psalm, in the synagogue." The Psalm is no more Messianic than it appears. The Apostle no more treats it as such than does the synagogue.

It is important to notice that the Psalmist, consistently with the account of the original creation (Gen. i. 26-30), refers the : **making a little lower than angels**, and the : **crowning with glory and honor** to the same divine transaction. When the former was done, so was the latter. When man was created, immediately all was subjected to him, as to one created for such dominion, and thus he was crowned with glory and honor.

The Author adds an exposition of the scriptural statement to which he has appealed.

Ver. 8 b. **For in subjecting to him the all things, he left nothing unsubjected to him.**

This exposition, *i. e.*, the fact that the Author is at pains to note precisely the scope of this part of the language quoted, shows that the fact stated there is what bears out his proposition in ver. 5. The **For** refers to that statement, and by this exposition of the pith of the quotation, shows that it is applicable to the

¹ Against Davidson.

present subject. By **the all things** is meant no more than what is described, Ps. viii. 6-8, and more fully still, Gen. i. 26-30. The article (*τὰ πάντα*) defines **the all things** to be those already named. But that comprehends everything pertaining to the present habitable world. The Author's exposition does not mean to extend that meaning to things not of the habitable world. Least of all does he mean to intimate that angels themselves are comprehended in the **all things**. His point is, that **leaving nothing unsubjected to man**, *left and leaves nothing to be subjected to angels*. By thus emphasizing and insisting on the scope of this: **all things**, the Apostle not only breaks down the assumption that all things in this world are subjected to angels, but the assumption that anything, as regarded the original institution, is so subjected. This prepares for the conclusion, that **the world to come was not subjected to them**. For that world must be included in the: **all things**.

With reference to this there is added a comment :

Ver. 8 c. **But now we see not yet all things subjected to him.**

The: **not yet** brings in the notion of a future, implying that then this subjection of all things will be realized. This resumes the Apostle's reference to "the world to come." This is the world that should afterward be. From this we see that the Apostle entertains the same expectation that is foretold in Isa. ~~lv.~~ ^{li.} 17 ; ~~lvi.~~ ^{lii.} 22 ; as the same is reproduced in 2 Pet. iii. 13 ; Rev. xxi. 1. This we do not yet behold, he says ; which is true still as it was then, except (and the exception is important) as we see things in Christ. **But**, he goes on to say, **we see Jesus**, and this antithesis is presented as if pointing to something that is the pledge and security that we shall behold the other, and thus, in effect, do by faith behold now. The sentence that presents this antithesis is so pregnant, and consequently so complex, that it demands very exact scrutiny.

Ver. 9. **But we behold him made a little lower than angels, even Jesus, on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one.**

In this sentence in the original, as in this literal rendering, it is only the logical movement of the context that will enable us to determine what is an objective clause and what a predicate, and what clause is qualified by: **on account of the suffering of death.**

However, it is plain that: **But** is adversative of the foregoing "now" ver. 8 c. It has been noted above, that the language of the Psalmist refers "making a little lower than angels," and "crowning with glory and honor," and "subjecting all things under man," to one transaction. When the one was done, the other was thereby done also. When, therefore, our Author here points to Jesus with predicates of the object expressed in terms borrowed from the Psalm, we must assume, that he would have them understood here, just as they are in the Psalm.¹

In the Psalm, **made a little lower than angels** and **crowned with glory and honor** are *both* predicates of "man." Here, then, they must *both* be predicates of **Jesus**.² Moreover, they must refer to one divine act in His case as in the other; so that He too, when **made a little lower than angels** was thereby **crowned with glory and honor**.³ The latter expression, therefore, does not mean the exaltation of Christ;⁴ nor is the former intended to express the idea of the humiliation of Christ.⁵ Taken as co-ordinate expressions of the same divine act toward Christ, they mutually exclude these meanings, as they can neither both refer to Christ's exaltation, nor both to His humiliation. Neither of these notions is presented here. The Author only means to point to Jesus as a man, made like men. Hence, likely, he names Him by His human name, **Jesus**, instead of by one of the three names already used, viz., "Son," "the First-begotten," "Lord." And it corroborates this view of his meaning, that, in the context immediately following (ver. 10-18), the Author amplifies this thought of the Son of God, made like men, and in so doing, mentions only what relates to

¹ von. Hof.

² Against Lün., and others, who make the former objective in apposition with Jesus and the latter predicate.

³ Comp. Matt. xxviii. 18.

⁴ Against Davidson, etc.

⁵ With von Hof., against most commentators.

His human life on earth. In this connection, it must be noticed again, as at i. 3, that the Apostle's discourse does not bring forward at all the notion of humiliation.¹ It is true that matters are mentioned that may be referred to that head. But the Apostle is not discoursing of that head. He is still exalting the Son as the agent of the present revelation. Thus, when pointing to Him as made man, he describes Him, in those scriptural terms, that are the most glorious description of man ; as the only man that realizes the description.

To Jesus, then, the Apostle points as realizing the original decree that subjected the world to man ; or, *rather as come to realize what has "not yet" been done completely*. For he is speaking of the mission of "the Son, who was made heir of all things." That Son, coming in that quality as man, and with a name so much more excellent than that of the angels, is, *ipso facto*, crowned with the glory and honor that is the equivalent of having all things subjected to Him.² By saying, ver. 8 *e*, "we see now not yet all things subjected to Him," the Apostle implies that *something* has been subjected to man ; viz., the dominion described in the omitted ver. 6 *a*, of Ps. viii. ; but *subjecting all is not completely done*. On the contrary, man is himself under the fear of death (vers. 14, 15), with all involved in that. **The suffering of death** expresses more than mere dying. Deliverance from that will bring about the complete accomplishment of subjecting all things to man, *i. e.*, will complete his crowning with glory and honor ; in other words, bring in "the world to come of which the Apostle speaks" (ver. 5). It is the future *completion* of this subjecting to which the **not yet** points.

It is because he is so speaking that the Apostle weaves into our present sentence the clauses : **on account of the suffering of death**, and : **that he might taste death for every one**. They express in respect to *what* and *how* Jesus effects that complete subjection and brings in the world to come, viz., in respect to **the suffering of death**, as the bar to having that glory ; and in respect to **his tasting death for everyone**, as the means of effecting that glory.

¹ Against *e. g.* Angus.

² Comp. Matt. xxviii. 18 ; xi. 27 ; John xiii. 3.

Thus, as the reference of "for" in ver. 5 proposes, the Author shows how there comes to be a salvation from the word spoken by angels, by showing that there is a world to come and always was from the original creation, and that this world was not subjected to angels, but to men, and that it is Jesus who is to effect that complete subjection, which He does by a deliverance from death, and by expiation of sins.

As to the much-debated question, whether : **on account of the suffering of death** belongs to : **made a little lower than angels**, or to : **crowned with glory and honor**,¹ there appears no sufficient reason why it does not equally belong to both ; seeing both, as explained above, are a double description of the same thing, viz., of the Son becoming man.² He became man, but such a crowning perfection of humanity, **on account of the suffering of death**. This **suffering of death** refers to the common lot of humanity, which, as the great bar to having all things subject to man, or rather as the nullification of the decree to that effect, calls for a remedy. As has been said already, **the suffering of death** does not mean simply dying, *i.e.*, simply the separation of soul and body. But, including that, it signifies an extended experience, of which man is *the passive subject* ; as by "the sufferings of sins" (viz., "when we were in the flesh"), Rom. vii. 5, is signified an extended experience continuing as long as the condition lasts that is expressed by : "being in the flesh." In Gal. v. 24, Paul calls the same thing "the sufferings of the flesh,"³ Another expression for : **the suffering of death** is : "the pangs of death," Acts ii. 24, where it is evi-

¹ See the representation of this debate in Stuart ; and the array of authorities on either side, which are equally balanced, in Lün., Alford.

² For the connection of διὰ τὸ πάθημα κ. τ. λ. with ἐστεφανωμένον, one cannot urge the position of the clause, as appears by comparison of vii. 18 ; nor the force of διὰ, as appears from the same passage, and also from Rom. iv. 25 ; nor the relevancy of the notions so connected, as also appears from Rom. iv. 25.

³ It is interesting, and reflects light on the topic of our text, to notice how in Rom. vii. 4-6, Paul treats the subject of sin as the barrier to the free life-service of righteousness and of fruitfulness to God, much as our Author here treats death (vers. 9, 10, 14, 15), and sins (ver. 17), as the barriers to that **glory and honor** to which God predestined His sons.

dent, from the reference to Ps. xvi. 10, that death is meant in a local sense, as Hades, or the state of the dead. Peter says of it, that Jesus "could not be holden of it." And Ps. xvi., which is unsurpassed by any Old Testament passage, in respect to its confident anticipation of eternal glory, represents Hades as an intermediate state that is a temporal bar to the realization of that glory that is the anticipation of "the saints that are in the earth," v. 3. But in the confidence of that inspiration that dictated this Psalm, the Psalmist looks to be rescued from that state, and exclaims: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades," v. 10. "Therefore," he says, moreover: "My heart is glad and my glory (קְבוֹרִי) rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope," v. 9. Yet, though, with the spirit of a seer, an Old Testament saint could look beyond the grave, and triumph in this fashion, it was very different when contemplating directly death and Hades. Then the Psalmist exclaimed: "O Lord, deliver my soul; oh save me for Thy mercies sake. For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in Hades who shall give Thee thanks." (Ps. vi. 4, 5; comp. Isa. xxxviii. 11, 18.) **The suffering**, or **the sufferings** (our ver. 10) experienced in this condition, from which "the saints in the earth" sighed and prayed to be delivered, even in anticipation of them, *were the suffering of death* referred to in our verse, as nullifying the destiny to glory and honor proper to man. They were the bar to all things being subjected to Him. On account of this **suffering of death** Jesus, too, was, like the sons of God that He would lead to glory, made a little lower than angels and crowned with glory and honor, that He might taste death for every one. We say these *were* the sufferings; for as will appear, the Author represents that they were ended by what Jesus suffered and did.

The statement that Christ became man **on account of the suffering of death** does not express *what* He was to do as a man on that account. This the Apostle explains by adding: **That he might taste death for every one.** By His dying men may be delivered from death (comp. ver. 15), and so the last bar to complete subjection of all things was to be removed. To this he adds, that this death and this purpose of Jesus' dying was **by the grace**

of God.¹ This statement, especially by the emphatic position of the words in this very emphatic clause, implies the denial of the opposite, viz., a death by the wrath of God.² Such was the death to which men were subjected, and of which they lived in constant dread (vers. 14, 15). It is, therefore, as very important, emphatically affirmed that Christ's death was the reverse of this; that it was **by the grace of God**. Only such a death could be for the benefit of those that were otherwise subject to death. This word: **grace**, refers not to Christ who died, but to men for whom He died. It has its full New Testament sense of: "favor to the undeserving."

This statement, that Christ came to die so, and for such an object, is the emphatic statement of the verse, and the climax of the passage beginning with **For**, ver. 5. It displays the Son as having "the world to come" subjected to Him, and not to angels; that even His death had no relation to the word spoken by them, as if He died, in consequence of that, as other men died; and so He can bring in a salvation and redeem those that were to be the inhabitants of the world to come.

The statement that Christ's coming was with the intent to **taste death for every one**, must not be pressed to mean that He comprehended every man individually or all men universally in the intended benefit. The Author presents the truth in its general aspect with reference to the completeness of the deliverance, and not with reference to distinctions that must be made when the truth is applied to particulars, *i. e.*, to the subjects delivered.³

Ver. 10. **For it became him, on account of whom are the all things and through whom are the all things, when he brought many sons to glory, to make perfect the captain of their salvation through sufferings.**

The **For** of this statement refers to the foregoing words: "by the grace of God." Having by that expression pointed to *God's* participation in the matter of Christ's death as explained above,

¹ On the reading *χωρίς* see Alford, Del.

² So von Hof.

³ Before passing from this remarkable sentence of ver. 9, it may be noted that its complex and difficult construction affords some evidence of its having Paul for Author. It reminds one of sentences in Romans and Galatians, with which one has wrestled.

the Apostle gives a reason for it. The reason relates not merely to the divine intervention, but to the *grace* which was its special characteristic. **For** brings in this reason. This reason he refers to God Himself, and to what **became him**, or was befitting God. In stating this, the Apostle repeats, in modified expressions, the thing that so finds its explanation in God's own character. It is two-fold; (*a*) the thing done, viz., bringing sons to glory, and (*b*) the way of doing this, viz., by the death of His Son, the special aim being to explain this latter (*b*). It is obvious that these bare notions are common, both to our verse and to the foregoing context (vers. 7-9). For nothing justifies us in understanding **glory** here to mean anything else than it does in verses 7, 9, and in its original place in Psa. viii. As we have seen, it describes the condition of one to whom all things are subjected. Moreover, we are equally constrained to understand **the all things** in our verse as meaning the same as "all things," verse 8. The article (τὰ πάντα), as in ver. 8 *b*, only defines **the all things** as the same as that already named.¹

In having **the all things** subjected to him, man, according to his original destiny, was **crowned with glory**. Such has been the representation preceding our verse, with the comment that: "now we see not yet the all things subjected to him." In our ver. 10 the expressions: **on account of whom are the all things**, and **by whom are the all things**, are not to be taken as merely a circumlocution for God.² This circumlocution is breviloquence that states how God is related to **the all things** so intimately concerned with man's glory. And this representation is not added to: **him** = "God," in order to justify and illustrate the use of ἔπρεπε, **it became**.³ For ἔπρεπε needs nothing to set it in a proper light, seeing it describes what God does as something inwardly befitting Him.⁴ It describes the suffering and death of Jesus as something that God could not permit not to happen, if He would save men.⁵ By adding the phrases we are considering,

¹ Comp. i. 2, 3.

² As Calvin, Lün., Del., Alford.

³ Against Lün., Del., von Hof. formerly in his *Weissagg u. Erfüllung.*; retracted in his Comm.

⁴ von Hof.

⁵ von Hof.

the Apostle expresses the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to **the all things** that would constitute the **glory** of men.¹ And he means to state, that, sovereign as He is, the only way for God *now* (8 c) to secure the glory to men was through the suffering and death of the Son.² And, in accordance with this, the achievement of this glory is now described as a **leading to glory**.

Instead of the expression: "crowning man with glory," the Apostle speaks here of **leading many sons to glory**; and instead of saying, Jesus died, he speaks of His **being perfected through suffering**. Moreover, the expressions being in the aorist, indirectly affirm that **God led many sons to glory** and that **he perfected Jesus**, whom the Apostle now designates: **the captain of their salvation**.

In **salvation** we have the correlative of **glory**. Salvation achieves the glory. This coincidence of the notions, **salvation** and **glory**, (viz., the glory of Ps. viii., "crowned with glory,") is represented by Isa. xi. 1-9; lxv. 17-29. This reference is enough to justify our understanding the Apostle to use the two words synonymously in the way just explained. And we have in this, another explanation why the Apostle now speaks of **leading to glory**. Calling Jesus, **the captain of their salvation**, we may suppose, is suggested as the fitting expression here, because of that light in which He is put in ver. 9, where Jesus, and He alone, is represented as realizing the description of man crowned with glory and honor by reason of having all things subjected to Him, and, as such, dying for the benefit of every one; but especially because of that delivery (*ἀπαλλάξῃ*, ver. 15), which was a leading forth from the power of death (ver. 14). This fitness appears further when we notice that at v. 9, he is called the "cause" or "author of salvation to them that obey him." He that has obedience is a **captain**.

The temporal reference of the clauses: **who led** (*ἀγαγόντα*, **leading**, in the past; aorist participle), **many sons to glory** and to **make perfect** (in the past; aorist infin.), etc., represents the **leading to glory** and **perfecting**, as things done in the past. The

¹ Comp. Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. viii. 6.

² Comp. on v. 7.

subject of both verbal notions is God. The past referred to must be the same in both cases; when the one was done the other was also. The reference of **perfecting** is obviously to the death of Christ, or rather to what was effected by His death and its attending sufferings. The death that perfected Christ was the means by which the sons were led to glory. This representation is likely to impress most readers strangely. But it is consistent with the Author's usual way of representing the effects of the death of Christ. Thus, at x. 14, he says, referring to this death: "For by one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Comp. x. 10.) Similarly, at v. 9, "Having been made perfect, He *became* the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey Him." Thus, there are effects of Christ's suffering and death that were accomplished when He Himself **was perfected**. The sanctification of all believers was such an effect. Leading them to glory was another. One was true as a past transaction, in the same sense as the other. The following verse (11), shows that **glory** and "sanctification" refer to the same thing, or rather are concomitants of one transaction. How it was true, may be left for fuller consideration, when the progress of this epistle shall have made us more familiar with the Author's way of representing the gospel. (Comp. below at vers. 14, 15; v. 9; x. 14.) For the present we may briefly note, that it was true in the sense that, on God's part and the Son's part, all was completely done that was to be done for accomplishing these results.

We need not, therefore, take the expressions in any other than their simple grammatical significance.¹

¹ A few samples of the constructions to which commentators have resorted, in order to reach a plain meaning (*i. e.*, one less strange than that afforded by the simple grammatical construction), may serve to increase the satisfaction with that given above. "As one that led many sons to glory;" making the ἀγαγόντα in apposition with τὸν ἀρχηγόν (Ebrard). "After he (*i. e.*, the Captain of their salvation) had led many sons to glory" (Winer, Gram., p. 343). "As He would lead" (Bleek, *et al.*). "When, or as He was leading," (Lün., Del.). "By leading . . . He perfected" (Moll, quoting and agreeing with Tholuck). "Having led many sons," etc. (von. Hof.), who also understands Old Testament saints to be meant, but finds an antithesis between "glory"

The Author, as we have noted, exchanges here the expression "man" (ver. 6), which was continued in vers. 6 b-8 by the pronoun (*Him, His*), for **many sons**, because **leading to glory** may not be predicated in the universal way that was proper in the original decree (Ps. viii. ; Gen. i.) It was only **sons** that God **led to glory** by His Son. At the same time he says **many sons**, to denote that they were a multitude. It is possible, even, that he may say, **many sons** *in distinction from all the sons* that are eventually to be led to glory. For he may have particularly in mind such as are described ver. 15, which, as the expression : **were all their life-time subject to bondage**, shows, describes those whose experiences of the sort named were of the past, and thus denotes saints of the past. Such *were* delivered from the power of death, by what Jesus did "through death" (v. 14). **Many sons** *were* then **led to glory** by Jesus. Of the rest, all *are* led to glory "who obey him," v. 9, who was then perfected as a Saviour through sufferings.

In saying that the Son was **perfected through sufferings**, the Apostle obviously refers to the mention of suffering in ver 9. The meaning is, that Christ died, and through death, attained the perfection so called.¹ By resorting to this expression, he interprets for us the reference to "the suffering of death" of ver. 9. As stated above, those sufferings were the bar to men coming to the glory celebrated in Ps. viii. ; or rather were the nullification of that glory. On account of those sufferings the Son was made man ; to lead men to glory He must deliver from those sufferings ; "to deliver others He must suffer Himself."² Having passed through the suffering, He **was perfected**. As He suffered "by the grace of God," (ver. 9), God was the one that perfected Him, and God did this "by grace," *i. e.*, through favor to men exposed to the sufferings of death.

By **perfected** is not meant completeness of moral character, as and "sufferings;" *e. g.*, while an Aaron was led to the high-priesthood, and so attained *his* glory, Christ was led through suffering to reach *his* glory-perfection.

¹ Comp. Luke xiii. 32, "The third day I am perfected."

² Comp. Matt. xxvii. 42.

is very commonly represented in the homiletical use of this text. That notion is at variance with all that the preceding context represents concerning Christ, who, to be "a Son of God," and "effulgence of the glory" of God, and "stamp of His substance," must have had moral completeness, if any thing. It is therefore a perversion of the truth expressed in this scripture to teach from it, as if from the example of Christ, that Christian character, viz., moral perfection, is to be attained through sufferings. Not only does our text not say that Christ was made morally perfect by suffering, but our Author says that believers are perfected by the offering that Christ made in His death, and by that way alone.¹ Moreover, it was not all sufferings, that, according to our Author, made Christ perfect, but the sufferings involved in death. It were absurd in His case to suppose that He was first a morally complete man, when He had died, and not till then. It were still more absurd to represent that believers become morally complete by means of that suffering that ends their life.

Neither does **perfected** mean that Christ was exalted to heavenly glory,² for the reasons given above (ver. 9), that show how "glory and honor" refer to something else.

It must mean the same as at v. 9, where it is said Christ was perfected, and that, not by the agony of soul He suffered in view of death, but by the act of dying itself. Having died, He was perfected, and His perfection fitted Him to "become the cause of everlasting salvation to those that obey Him," and He so became. His perfection was that fitness, and being perfected, *He reached the goal of His earthly destiny*,³ which was to save sinners.⁴ Similarly, in our text: when God perfected Jesus, it was as Captain of salvation for the sons whom He led to glory. By His undergoing the sufferings of death, Jesus was so perfected. Without dying He could not be such a Captain of salvation.

An emphatic thought of the present verse (10) is, that what is described as done is affirmed to be what **befitted God**. This is truly a remarkable saying that has few parallels in scripture.

¹ x. 14.

² Against Alford, Lindsay, Lün., etc.

³ So von Hof.; comp. Davidson, p. 65.

⁴ Comp. Luke xiii. 32; John iv. 34.

What was done by Christ to save men is referred to something in God Himself, as its ultimate reason. The question arises, naturally: *Why was this, and just this, befitting God.* The following verse answers this question,¹ and **for** introduces the reason.

Ver. 11 a. **For both he that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one.**

The subjects of the foregoing verse, viz., "sons led to glory," and "Captain of salvation," are resumed here under different designations. The latter is called: **he that sanctifies**; the former: **they that are sanctified**. Or rather, **the sanctifier and the sanctified**; for the present participles are used substantively,² designating the parties named according to their relative positions. This is a species of breviloquence that implies the affirmation, that it is by being sanctified that sons are led to glory, and that He that leads them to glory does it by Himself sanctifying them. And this, in part, answers the question prompted above, viz., *Why was such a way of leading sons to glory something befitting God?* Though God was sovereign of "the all things," whose subjection to man would crown him with glory and honor, yet could He not lead man to glory without sanctifying him. And **sanctify** has here its usual meaning of setting something into a state opposite to that of common (κοινόν), i. e., into a state befitting the nature of God,³ to be for God's service.

The complete reply to the question is in the affirmation, that the sanctifier and the sanctified **are all of one**. The word **all** (πάντες), combined as it is with the emphatic conjunctive form **both--and** (τέ-και), has a special emphasis,⁴ which we may render by **all of them**; and pointedly comprehends both parties in what is affirmed. It emphasizes especially, that what is affirmed is true of the sanctified, of whom it might not be thought, as well as of the Sanctifier, of whom it was obviously true. What is affirmed is that they are **all of one**. This **one** (ἕνός) is not to be taken as neuter gender,⁵ = "one nature," for nothing in the context suggests the supplement of "nature" or any kindred generic sub-

¹ Against Lün.

² Comp. Winer, Gram., p. 353.

³ Comp. Cremer, *Lex. sub. voc.*, and Heb. ix. 13.

⁴ Lün.

⁵ Against Calvin.

stantive; nor can the proposition $\epsilon\zeta$ of itself, have such force,¹ but denotes origin, source;² not kind or quality. It must be taken as masculine. Taking it so, many understand the: **one** to mean Adam;³ others again to mean Abraham,⁴ appealing to ver. 16. But the meaning is clearly determined for us by the expression "many sons," in ver. 10, and the fact that our expression: **the sanctified** is only the same subject continued under another name. The Author by: **of one** means **of God**,⁵ and means to affirm of **all of them** that they are alike sons of God. He says: **of one** and not: "of Him" ($\epsilon\zeta \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$),⁶ because he would emphasize the unity of the two parties named. And this presents the reason why God treated the one as He did the others. Suffering attending death (v. 8), and chastisement (xii. 6, 7), are the lot of sons; thus, He that was made the Captain or leader of many sons to bring them to glory, was made complete as such by suffering what they suffered. Thus, what is affirmed in ver. 10, as befitting God, or as the divine $\pi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon$, is proved.⁷

The force of the **For**, that introduces our ver. 11, does not extend beyond the first clause of this verse.⁸ In a fashion that is characteristic of the Author, and of which we have had an example at i. 4, there is here a transition from affirming something of God, to affirming something of Jesus; and what follows presents Him as the actor. But what follows takes its departure from the statement of ver. 11 *a*, which, besides accounting for the divine $\pi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon$ affirmed in ver. 10, equally accounts for what was true of Jesus Himself. And thus, referring to the statement of ver. 11 *a*, the Author proceeds.

Ver. 11 *b*. **For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12, saying: I will declare thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise. 13. And again: I will put my trust in him. And again: Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.**

¹ With Davidson; against Lün. ² Bleek. ³ von Hof. ⁴ Bengel.

⁵ Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 6. ⁶ Against von Hof. ⁷ Comp. Riehm, p. 365 sqq.

⁸ Against the common view, according to which the force of $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu$ extends to the end of ver. 11 (Lün.), or to the end of ver. 13 (Alford), or to the end of ver. 15, and with that to the end of ver. 18 (Riehm, von Hof.).

The Author affirms of Jesus, that **he is not ashamed to call brethren** those sanctified; precisely as at xi. 16, he says that "God is not ashamed to be called their God," who desire a heavenly country. The choice of expression is peculiar, being an example of "meiosis,"¹ which would convey precisely the contrary notion, viz., that the Son of God delights to call them brethren. But expressed thus, it is intimated, consistently with all that has been represented of the Son, that His calling them brethren is not a matter of course, but the exhibition of kindly affection and much humility, and that there is a great difference between Him as a Son, and the many sons; He being more eminent.² It is affirmed of the Son, that **he is not ashamed**, etc., in the present tense, which expresses that such is His present attitude; and agreeably to this the Author represent Him as *now speaking* (λέγων) the words that illustrate this attitude.

The Author here again uses Old Testament language, in the same free way to clothe his own thoughts that we observed at i. 5-13. We may now understand him in this way with the more assurance, because in vers. 6-8, we have had an unmistakable example of his appealing to the Old Testament for proof. As said above, such an example shows, that when the Author makes such an appeal, he will do it as others do, in no ambiguous way. It increases our assurance in treating the present quotations of the Old Testament as we do, to notice, that now the language is as freely put into the mouth of the Son as in the previous case it was ascribed to God. Moreover, the view, that he illustrates by a dramatic representation, agrees with the fact that he introduces the Son as so *speaking now*, and not as having spoken long ago in scripture.³ Of course, the fundamental fact that determines us to this view is, that here, as in i. 5-13, it is impossible in the original Old Testament context, to interpret the language quoted in the sense in which our passage presents their words. Therefore we reject the common view⁴ that, "These passages are here

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. xi. 22, οὐκ ἐπαινώ.

² So Chrys.

³ Contrast v. 5, 6.

⁴ As here again, the above explanation of our passage is a departure from all precedent, it seems necessary to say something more in its defense.

The same difficulties are encountered here as at i. 5-13, if we view the pre-

regarded as directly prophetic, expressing, by anticipation, the relation of the Son to those whom He saves, and their common relation to God.”¹

We are to understand, then, that our Author here represents in a dramatic manner the truth that the Son is not ashamed to call “brethren” those sanctified. That is, he represents this truth in actions which he portrays the Son as performing. For the action is more than the words in this representation. And what is now

sent Old Testament language as *scriptural proof* that Jesus was not ashamed to call brethren those sanctified. It leads to explanations of the original context of the language quoted that never would have been thought of otherwise. This statement is less true of Ps. xxii., from the fact that its ver. 1, was quoted by Jesus upon the cross (Matt. xxvii. 46), and because its vers. 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, appear in the gospels as especially fulfilled at the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 35, 39, 40; Mark xv. 29 sqq.; Luke xxiii. 35 sqq.; John. xix. 23; xx. 25, 27). Yet of Ps. xxii., actually spoken by Jesus, it must be admitted, that the words receive in His mouth a totally different sense from what they have in their original place. As von Hofmann says: “In the psalm-prayer a suppliant implores rescue from the peril of death, whereas the crucified Jesus craves deliverance through death.” There is no recourse, then, but that expressed by von Hofmann: “We yield the point, that the Psalm is altogether and simply a monument of some passage in David’s life.” When he adds: “But because of David’s place in redemptive history, it was fitted to be read as the Old Testament expression of that, wherein the New Testament King of God’s people was the counterpart of the Old Testament King,” he introduces a notion that could not have occurred to the original readers of this epistle with reference to the present Davidic language, as pointing its significance. “That conception of prophecy which we express by the term ‘typical’ does not seem anywhere entertained in the Epistle,” (Davidson.) Moreover, were this the way of detecting the significance of the first quotation, it must be also of the two that follow. Yet the second quotation: **I will put my trust in him**, may be from one of four passages of the Old Testament (see below), and it cannot positively be determined which, and views are chiefly divided between its being language of David (2 Sam. xxii. 3), or of Isaiah (viii. 17). By not explicitly naming the source of his quotation, our Author has left us without a clue to its significance by which to interpret it according to the above view of von. Hofmann; in other words, we cannot tell “what is the Old Testament counterpart of this New Testament expression,” *i. e.*, whether Jesus speaks as King, or Prophet.

The first of our quotations (ver. 12), is from Ps. xxii. 22. It is from the LXX., except that instead of *ἀπαγγεῖλω* we have *ἀπαγγέλω*. This, Delitzsch says, is because the Author quoted from memory. Von Hofmann says: “because it

¹ Davidson.

represented has such close analogy to actual language of the Saviour, that it is far more reasonable to suppose *that* language to be the Apostle's authority for what he says, than the Old Testament passages that he seems to quote for proof.

First, in language drawn from Ps. xxii. 22, he represents the Son as starting on His mission in which He was to speak for God to men. Doing this he says: **I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise,** better suits the object τὸ δυνά σου" (which, if so, shows that the Author was familiar with the original and translated אֶפְרָה שֶׁנֶּחֱדָה for himself. Comp. Ps. lxxviii. (lxxvii.) 6. This is likely enough). The words are the Psalmist's, and affirm what he will do in consequence of the hoped for deliverance, precisely as in Ps. li. 12, 13: "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation . . . Then will I teach transgressors thy way." Such being the case, the question arises: How are they quoted as the words of Jesus? Commentators debate whether David utters the words prophetically or typically. Von Hofmann maintains the latter; Delitzsch both. But we may ask: what evidence is there of either? They are quoted without comment. Did, then, the readers know that, either typically or prophetically, Christ was the speaker in that Psalm? If, in ver. 8, the Author pauses to make a comment, that after all expresses a self-evident fact, how does he omit a comment here to show what is so obscure, if the common assumption be correct?

The next two quotations (ver. 13), if, as most commentators justly suppose, they are from Isa. viii. 17, 18, resemble what we noticed at i. 8, 9, viz., a single passage quoted as two. This seems itself to show that the Author does not mean to employ the language according to its original meaning, but uses it with a meaning peculiar to his own context. But, according to Delitzsch, the nearest approach in the LXX. to, the phrase: ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτόν, is πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτόν, which occurs only twice beside Isa. viii. 17. The phrase is near enough not to require remark. The two other places are 2 Sam. xxii. 3; Isa. xii. 2, and could just as easily be turned to account and made Messianic by the same process as is applied to Ps. xxii., especially 2 Sam. xxii., which is a Psalm of David, and where, if ever, he must have spoken as a typical person (comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2, where he is called Messiah, or Anointed). Also Ps. xviii. 2, is supposed by some to furnish the quotation (Pareus, Owen; comp. Wolff, Turner). But Delitzsch chooses Isa. viii. 17, because: "it alone is from a strictly Messianic passage." Yet, as the words are produced as a separate quotation, it affords a presumption against their being taken from the same place as the next quotation following. And seeing it is by these quotations that Messianic passages in the Old Testament are detected, why not take the opportunity this furnishes of detecting another? Surely the more we have of them the better, for the style of exegeses we are considering!

But taking Isa. viii. 17 as the source of the quotation, ver. 13 a, then we find that the original Hebrew makes Isaiah the speaker. At this point the LXX.

ver. 12. This recalls the language of John. xvii. 25, 26: "O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known." The Author's way of saying it is pointed by the expression **my brethren**; but the next quotation shows that it is the action more than the expression **my brethren**, that displays what the Author means, for there the expression is omitted.

Second, he represents the Son in the same condition with those very materially differs from the Hebrew, changing both the speaker and the language he utters. It is in the LXX. that Delitzsch finds the coloring that best suits the interpretation that Messiah or Immanuel is the real speaker. But the fact just noted about the LXX. rather increases the doubt about our Author's really quoting the words as Scripture proof at all.

The third of our quotations is evidently from Isa. viii. 18. But just as evidently Isaiah is the speaker, and the children referred to are his two sons with the prophetic names. Delitzsch says: "The spirit of Jesus was already in Isaiah, and pointed, in the family of Isaiah, to the New Testament church;" and "thus we have the deepest typical relation to justify our Author in taking the words of Isaiah as the words of Jesus." But it may be replied to this, that with such an interpretation we have a mystery as profound as Melchizedek. Our Author gives a chapter or more to the exposition of the typical significance of Melchizedek. How could he expect his readers to detect the typical ground of his present reference to Isaiah without a similar elaboration? Or, if without comment they understand *this* reference in the way expounded by Delitzsch, why does the Author need to expound the Melchizedek? We might appeal also to Paul's reference to Ishmael and Hagar (Gal. iv.) with the same inquiry.

If we take our present text, ver. 13 b, as authority for such interpretation, it puts the Old Testament in a most extraordinary light, and makes it a book that we must despair of understanding. Its best meaning is not its plain meaning, but one that lies beyond the scope of our vision; and we cannot hope to know what we read, without an inspired interpreter. We know it only here and there by the few interpretations that we find in the New Testament. This is the sort of thing that drives one to the false position of Bishop Marsh respecting types, viz., that "the only possible source of information on this subject,"—viz., what are types,—*"is scripture itself."* (Comp. Fairbairn: Typology Bk. I., ch. 1.) For if *we* take such interpretations (as those that are made on the assumption that Paul, in the passage before us, and i. 5-13, is appealing to scripture as authority for what he affirms) and attempt in our turn to expound other scripture in the same fashion for ourselves, then the business will be monopolized by those that possess the most imagination.

It is to be noticed that the interpretation of Delitzsch is abortive after all its labor. For it does not reach a result that makes Isa. viii. 18 (our ver. 13 b) any proof that Jesus calls the redeemed "His brethren." For the speaker still

to whom He was sent, sustaining, along with them, the same relation to God, and saying: "**I will put my trust in him,**" ver. 13 *a*, (from Isa. viii. 17). The fitness of this allusion appears thus: "Isaiah, through whom Jehovah spoke, was just as those whom he taught, consigned to live in hope that God would fulfill what He had promised through himself, and, putting his trust in God, to await the time when He would again turn His face to the house of Jacob. As this was true of him by whom the Old Testament word was spoken, so also was it true of Him by whom God has spoken now."¹ As corroborative of the Apostle's representation, we may recall John. v. 30: "I can of myself do nothing; I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (Comp. John vi. 38.)

Third, he represents the Son returning with those brethren, the "many sons whom he leads to glory," saying: "**Behold I and the children which God hath given me,**" ver. 13 *b*; (Isa. viii. 18).

The children are so called as children of God,² and not of Jesus, to whom they are brethren. He owns them at the threshold of glory where he once was without them, the only Son. This recalls John xvii. 22, 24: "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them. Father, that which thou hast given

calls attention to himself and *his children*; which is no proof that he calls them brethren and is not ashamed of the relation. Moreover, we may notice again what was remarked above on i. 5-13 and this sort of interpretation, that whereas at i. 5-13 every effort was made to show that God was to be regarded as the speaker of the words referred to, where a Psalmist was the actual speaker, here, on the contrary, the same arts are used to show that, when a Psalmist or Prophet spoke, it was really the Messiah speaking. Such efforts tend to reduce the Old Testament to an enigma.

In view of these considerations, we may be sure that the common view, viz.: that the quotations before us are an appeal to Old Testament proof, is incorrect. The view given in our explanations involves no such perplexities. It may disappoint the reader by its simplicity, and after being used to fancy so much, he may exclaim, is that all! But one of the hardest lessons is to "learn not to despise the simplicity of the truth." When we take it in its simplicity, we begin to learn its true greatness. So it was with some Galileans after they had exclaimed concerning Christ: "Is not this the carpenter's Son?" We believe that such will be result in respect to the explanation given in this commentary of Paul's use of scriptural language in i. 5-13; ii. 12, 13.

¹ von. Hof.

² Comp. Davidson.

me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Thus representing the truth according to the known facts of the manifestation of the divine Saviour on earth, and doing it in this scriptural language, the Apostle sets forth the condescension and love of His behavior in a way both grand and tenderly affecting, and fitted to awake our adoration.

The passage (11 *b*—13), that we have just been considering, explains the subjective attitude of the Son toward those whom He sanctified. He unequivocally owned his relationship to them as being "of one" Father. But this does not sound the depths of what appeared in the Son when He came to speak for God to us. The Author continues to show *what the Son did*, after having shown what the Father did (vers. 9, 10), and he adds another statement. It, too, is the logical inference from the statement, ver. 11 *a*, that "the Sanctifier and sanctified are all of one," and not from the statement that the Son owns them as brethren. In other words, what follows, like the act of owning His brethren, is the consequence of the fact that they *are* brethren, *i. e.*, children of one Father with Himself.

Ver. 14 *a*. Since then the children have been sharers of blood and flesh, he also himself in like manner partook of them.

The version of 1881 translates: "**sharers in blood and flesh**," in order to mark that a different word (*κοινωνέω*) is used from what appears in the apodosis, viz., *μετέχω*, translated: **partook** of the same. We use the same method for like reason. Alford, with appeal to Bleek, represents the common view, that the said verbs are almost convertible, "so that a minute distinction of meaning is hardly to be sought for." It seems probable, however, that the use of different verbs marks a difference of meaning, which may be to mark a different object.¹ In the instance before us it may mark that the object referred to in *τῶν αὐτῶν* is different from that governed by *κεκοινωνήκεν*, in which case *τῶν αὐτῶν*

¹Such is the effect in the illustrative quotation repeated by Alford from Bleek, *ἐξ ἰσού τῶν κινδύνων μετασχόντες, οὐχ ὁμοίως τῆς τύχης ἐκοινωνήσαν*.

would refer to τὰ παῖδια.¹ Then μετέσχεν would be equivalent to μέτοχος ἐγένετο, and the correlative of what is stated iii. 14, μέτοχοι τοῦ Χ. γεγόναμεν: "we have become companions of Christ." (Comp. vii. 13.)

Taking that construction, the Apostle says: **Since the children have partaken of blood and flesh he also took part equally with them.** This construction, with the reference of τῶν αὐτῶν to τὰ παῖδια, makes it easy to understand why the Author selects the adverb παραπλησίως, instead of, say, ὁμοίως. He would signify how the Son took his place *alongside of* His brethren on an equal footing to endure what they suffered as they endured, and on the same ground contend with and conquer death.² This construction contextually seems preferable to the common one that is given in the translation above, and might be chosen here without hesitancy, were it not that it is so entirely singular. The result of it is not doctrinally different from the common rendering. For if Christ became the companion of His brethren in the respect mentioned in the present statement, it was in order that He might partake as they did of blood and flesh. But stated in the form as just construed, the representation is more graphic, and connects more appropriately with the graphic representations of vers. 12, 13. Moreover, so construed, μετέσχεν in the aorist, becomes natural, as it describes the historically past condition wherein Christ was *such* a companion. This obviates the inquiry: why not the perfect, as *ἔσχετο*?

The Author says **the children**, meaning the same thing as "many sons," ver. 10; but he naturally exchanges this expression for that used in ver. 13, and thereby marks the identity of the subject. He says **they have been sharers**, and the perfect tense denotes that the situation remains the same.

But the question is raised: *sharers with whom?* It is common to supply "one another."³ But *ἑαυτῶν* most commonly

¹ A reference not suggested by any one known to us except Alford, and expressly rejected by him without comment. Alford follows Bleek.

² Comp. Lexx. Passow, Liddell and S. *sub voc.*; and Herod I. 77, ἀγωνασάμενος οὕτω παραπλησίως Κύρος. "Cyrus: fighting at equal advantage."

³ deWette, Bleek, Alford, von Hof., etc.

has a dative of the person¹ different from the subject; and it seems quite as natural to supply "others not children." This consists with the representation of ver. 10 (see above), where "sons" marks a distinction from "man" in general, of ver. 6 sqq. And this receives further confirmation when, in ver 16, the Author so pointedly states that Christ "laid hold on a seed of Abraham to help them." By **blood and flesh**, of which, the children partook, and Jesus with them, is meant human nature as it is subject to death, or over which death has power, and according to which men are mortal. This is plain from the following inference, which states, first of all (a), that thus Christ became subject to death equally with others, and then (b), what He effected by undergoing death.

The statement of ver 14 *a* is the premise to a conclusion that follows immediately :

Ver. 14 *b*. **In order that by death he might bring to nought him that has the power of death, that is the devil.**

The suddenness with which our Author introduces this mention of the devil tends to confound the modern reader. (Comp. at i. 4, on the similar introduction of angels as a subject.) It must be assumed that *he* assumes on the part of the first readers a familiarity with the notion presented, that requires no introduction. We may assume that the pith of what is meant here is familiar Christian doctrine to us; more familiar to *us* in the abstract form of presenting it, than in the concrete and personal form used in our text. We have in fact the same difference that we noticed at i. 14; ii. 2, viz., the difference between the manner of presenting a truth in this epistle and of presenting the same in Romans and Galatians. The recurrence of this use of a concrete and personal representation in preference to the abstract, denotes a deliberate and consistent purpose of the Author. That purpose seems to be to bring forward every *spiritual* and *personal agency* that has anything to do with religion, and confront it with Jesus Christ, and to affirm the complete superiority of the latter in every respect.

In Rom. v. 12, 14, Paul says: "Sin entered into the world, and

¹ Buttm. Gram., p. 160, and Bleek, *in loc.*

death by sin ;” and “death reigned.” In Rom. viii. 3, he says: “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and (as an offering) for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” In our chapter it is said that God, in bringing many sons unto glory, made the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering (ver. 10), and that the Son partook of blood and flesh that He might through death nullify Him that has the power of death, that is the devil (ver. 14). And the effect of the power of death is represented (ver. 15), as a life-long fear that operated as a bondage. “Death reigning,” and “the devil having the power of death” are kindred notions. And so are “the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and “Jesus taking part equally with the children in their partaking of blood and flesh.” And so, furthermore, are “the Son condemning sin in the flesh,” and “Jesus through death nullifying Him that has the power of death.” Comp. also 2 Tim. i. 10.

We are obliged to borrow such light from sources outside of our epistle, and thus acquire some equality with the original readers. We may excuse ourselves from investigating Jewish notions relative to death and the devil’s part in it.¹ The purely scriptural notions of the present passage are the ones important to us. We may content ourselves, for the rest, with what is plainly intimated by the Apostle’s words before us. The text affirms indirectly that **the devil has the power of death**. “Death is subjected to him, and must be subservient to his purposes. Not that the devil has power to kill when he will ; nor that being subjected to death is to be ascribed to the devil. . . . But, assuming these limitations, the devil has the power of death so far as *he has the power to use it against men*. As soon as death (in God’s own time) overtakes a man, then the devil’s will is fulfilled to get this man wholly *in his power*. Death delivers the souls of men into his hand. For that which falls into the power of death, falls also into his power. In the hands of the devil, death is a mighty agent in destroying the souls of men. *Making powerless* him that has the power of death consists, accordingly, in this, that he is deprived of the ability to use death as a means of

¹ In these respects, consult Alford, Del., *in loc.*, Riehm, p. 556 sqq., 654 sqq.

getting and holding men in his power. 'Through death' Christ made powerless him that has the power of death. The Author does not say *by his death*, because in the 'oxymoron' he would emphasize that the devil was overcome 'precisely by that which is his sphere of power,'¹ therefore, that Christ turned the devil's weapon against Himself, and thereby got the victory over him. But of course the death of Christ is meant."²

The representations of this quotation should be accepted with the modification, that the nullification of the devil, according to the Apostle's present statement as qualified by vers. 10, 15, 16, extends no further than the rescue of God's many sons whom Jesus led to glory. **The devil has the power of death** still, (τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα) but it was nullified with respect to those mentioned. The Apostle Peter also speaks of this power in the passage cited above,³ but calls it (by implication) the power of death = Hades. He says: "It was not possible that He (Jesus) should be holden of it (κρατεῖσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ = held in its power)." By implication this says, that such as David *were* so holden when *they* died. The foregoing quotation is to be accepted with the further modification, that, as far as it concerns true believers, it applies to the situation previous to the intervention of Jesus, described in the text. After that intervention, viz., His perfection and the rescue here described, the situation is for ever changed for those that obey Him. (Comp. v. 9.) Moreover, by: **through death** the Apostle may here (as Peter at Acts ii. 24) mean death in a local sense, and δὲ⁴ is then to be taken locally. Through the condition or domain itself where the devil has power, Jesus nullified the devil. This construction would mark yet another parallel between our text and Rom. viii. 3, noted above. Christ in the flesh condemned sin, and through Hades destroyed the power of the devil.

What this nullifying of the power of the devil was, is represented in the closely (paratactically) conjoined statement:

Ver. 15. **And might deliver those as many as by fear of death were all their life subject to bondage.**

¹ von Hof., *Schriftbew.* ii., p. 274; also, his Comm. *in loc.* Comp. Chrys.

² Riehm, pp. 557, 558. ³ Acts ii. 24. ⁴ See Grimm's Lex., *sub. voc.*, A. I.

That he might deliver, indirectly affirms that He did deliver. The rescue was from the power of death; not from the bondage described in the following words, which is described as a thing of the past. **Those**, refers as a demonstrative pronoun, to the subjects expressed by "sons," ver. 10, "brethren," ver. 11, and "children," vers. 13, 14.¹ The *ὡς* = **as many as**, that rarely occurs after a demonstrative pronoun, seems to imply others that had not the fear described in the following words,² and so to define, in an exclusive way, those that received the benefit of this rescue.³ Such a qualified statement of the extent of this rescue is required by the representation that the devil *has* the power of death (ver. 14). Were all rescued that were or might come under his power, his power would be ended.

Those that were delivered are described by saying: **by fear of death they were all their life subject to bondage.**

They were subject all their life, describes the situation as a thing of the past, and as characterizing the time while they lived. It is implied that, when they died, what they feared respecting death became actual experience.

"The life of men before the incarnation and the Lord's victory over death, was a perpetual fear of dying. The very Psalms, in which the saints of old lay bare their inmost souls are proof of this.⁴ The contemplation of death and of the dark, cheerless Hades in the background, was, even for the faithful among Israel under the Old Testament, unendurable. They sought to hide themselves from it with their faith in Jehovah, and so in the infinite bosom of love, whence one day the Conqueror of death and the prince of death should issue."⁵

The foregoing admirable representation of the sentiment with which saints before Christ viewed death makes it probable that the Apostle means by his descriptive designation to refer *only* to such as the subjects of the deliverance mentioned in the text. It

¹ Bengel.² Against Alford.³ Contrast Ps. lxxiii. 4; x. 6.⁴ Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 11; cxv. 17; Isa. xxxvii. 18.⁵ Delitzsch; comp. also Riehm, in *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1870, p. 164sq., reviewing Klosterman on; *The hope of future deliverance from the state of death in Old Testament saints*, Gotha, 1868.

favours this view to remember that the Psalmist says of the ungodly : "There are no bands in their death" (Ps. lxxiii. 4), and : "There is no fear of God before his eyes" (Ps. xxxvi. 1). This reference, beside the support it has in the subjects "sons," "brethren," "children" (vers. 10, 11, 13, 14), is confirmed by the statement of the following verse :

Ver. 16. **For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of a seed of Abraham.**

The $\delta\eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ = **verily**, ($\acute{\alpha}\pi\lambda\epsilon\gamma$, and not found at all in the LXX.)¹ gives an emphasis, and even an indignant emphasis to the present denial. The verb $\epsilon\pi\iota\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ means "to lay hold of in order to help," the $\epsilon\pi\iota$ in composition relating to the object laid hold of, and not to the subject who lays hold. The rendering of the English Version of 1611 understood it, with the great majority of commentators, in the latter way, and translated : **he took on him**, and supplies the notion "nature;" and thus the second clause of our verse became erroneously a favorite proof text for the doctrine that the Son of God assumed human nature; and it is commonly so used still.² As far back as Castellio, the true rendering was asserted, and warmly combatted by Beza. It is of comparatively recent date that commentators have agreed on the above correct rendering. As Delitzsch remarks : "This example may be added to the proofs, that exegetical tradition is not infallible."

The former misapprehension and false rendering of our verse was due to a misapprehension of its logical connection. The mention of **angels** here shows that the Author has not passed from the thought stated in ver. 5. There he has affirmed that : "not to angels did God subject the world that should afterwards be." We inferred there (see above) that the affirmative contrary of this statement is, that God *did* subject it to men. From ver. 5, *i. e.*, in vers. 6-15, the Apostle has been proving and illustrating this affirmative. *Proving* it by appeal to what the Old Testament affirms, and by comment thereon (vers. 6-8), and by pointing to Jesus as the one in whom it is realized (ver. 9). *Illustrating* it by affirming God's providence in the saving work

¹ Alford.

² Comp. Alford's full history of the text; and see Del.

that the Son did (ver. 10), and by representing the Son's own attitude in reference to those He sanctified (vers. 11-13), and by what He did in consequence of His being, with them, of one Father (vers. 14-15). All that has been said, vers. 6-15, represents a human cause, viz., a world to come that was for sons of God, and Jesus as undertaking that cause for them. Our present verse affirms this expressly: **he laid hold on** (he helped)¹ **a seed of Abraham**. But it is coupled with a negative contrary: **he laid not hold on** (he helped not) **angels**. Thus we see the same antithesis of ver. 5 reappear. It is in our ver. 16 that the Author expressly states the affirmative contrary of the negative statement of ver. 5. The **For** of our verse, therefore, while referring immediately to what is stated ver. 15, extends back to the statement of ver. 5, of which statement ver. 15 is the convincing proof.

What the Apostle affirms, then, in our verse, is, not that Christ saves men and not angels. *ἐπιλαμβ*, does not mean "to save." Moreover, who could entertain a notion of angels and salvation having any relation to one another?² How flat must be the emphatic denial of something that no one ever thought of affirming! What the Apostle says is, that Christ does not help the cause of angels, but that He does help the cause of a seed of Abraham. The angels, too, had a cause, *i. e.*, a commission, as we have seen.³ We have seen, too, that what the Son came to reveal is a salvation for men from consequences attending the charge committed to angels.⁴ The Apostle now, after the representations of vers. 6-15, affirms that Christ takes part with the latter to help them, and not with the former to help them. The occasion for the tone of indignant emphasis in saying it, is the same that calls for the statement of ver. 5 and the subsequent representations. It is the same emotion that repeatedly reveals itself in Paul, where he deals with a tendency to bring men into subjection to the law. Compare his: "Received ye the Spirit by

¹ Alford.

² Except one were to think of "angels that kept not their first estate," Jude 6; comp. 2 Pet. ii. 4; which is wholly inadmissible here.

³ See above on i. 14; ii. 2.

⁴ See above on ii. 1, 3.

the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? . . . He that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith," Gal. iii. 2, 5. It is much to the point here to recall the words of Christ: "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope," John v. 45. And again: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world," John xii. 47.

Our verse says **he taketh hold**, in the present tense, because it refers to the present help of salvation now available.¹ It says also: **a seed of Abraham**, where we would expect the Apostle to say the seed of Adam, or to use some other generic term. This is because we are more used to apprehend the truth as it would be spoken to Gentiles. But the Apostle is here writing to Christian Jews, and it is with express fitness to them and their relation to "the word spoken by angels" (ver. 2) that he says **Jesus lays hold on a seed of Abraham**.

Though the view of our verse given above is not at all that of von Hofmann, yet what he says on the word *ἐπιλαμβάνει*, and **the seed of Abraham** is so admirable, and so easily adapted to that view that it is but just to reproduce it.

"The *ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι* here is the same as that at viii. 9, where it is the (LXX.) rendering of that same *קִיָּיָהוּ* in Jer. xxxi. 32, that in Isa. xli. 9, is inexactly translated by *ἀντεπιλαμβάνεσθαι*. In both these instances the representation is this, that Jehovah has not left Israel to itself, but has laid hold of it, in the one instance to take it to Himself, in the other to lead it out of Egypt. And such is the meaning in the passage before us.² When Jesus extends His hand to lay hold, it is to such as are Abraham's seed. That they are so called (and not men) in contrast with angels, is to be explained by the epistle being destined for Jewish readers; yet only so far as so destining it involves a connection with what pertains to the Old Testament. Not, however, in the sense that the Author avoided reference to the Gentiles in order not to offend his readers.³ He means **the seed of Abraham**

¹ Against Davidson.

² Comp. Del.

³ Against Grotius, Tholuck, Bleek, de Wette, Lün., etc.

not differently from Isa. xli. 8, which passage he had in mind ; viz., not directly as a designation for Christians in general,¹ still less for the fleshly descendants of Abraham as such,² but, in the sense of redemptive history, as designating the Church of that promise given to Abraham.³ In the Old Testament period it had its existence in the form of a nationality that traced its origin to Abraham, and thus the Saviour found it, and reached out His saving hand to it.⁴ As it is the Apostle's purpose now to point to the present fulfillment in Christ Jesus of the Old Testament promise, he names as the subject of the redeeming act of Jesus, not a plurality of individual men, but the Church of the promise of redemptive history that descended from Abraham, which, of course, is now the Christian Church." Thus far von Hofmann. But his sagacious reference to viii. 7 sqq. gives a clue to a more precise notion of the deliverance that the Apostle has in mind in the passage before us. It is but another aspect of that which is represented at viii. 7 sqq. as release from the conditions of the old covenant, and exchanging them for the new. Here it is, as we found at vers. 2, 3, a salvation from the consequences of the word spoken by angels. That especially shows the fitness of the specific expression : **a seed of Abraham**. The law mediated by angels was imposed upon a seed of Abraham. The hand that gave deliverance from its consequences must first of all lay hold of that seed.

With the emphatic statement of this ver. 16 the Apostle finishes what he has to say about Christ and angels, and does not again recur to them in this respect. We notice that the issue of this representation is like that of the representations that are to follow, viz., the representations of the former priesthood yielding to the priesthood of Christ ; the law giving way to the better promise ; the old covenant giving place to the new. Here it is the preceding *agents* of revelation ceding place to the present *agent*, viz., the Son of God, and the condition brought about by the angels as "ministering spirits," i. 14, yielding to a "world to come," ver. 5, that Christ inaugurates. What we have been in-

¹ Against Böhme, Kuinöl.

² Comp. Del.

³ Comp. Del.

⁴ Comp. *e. g.*, Matt. i. 21.

vestigating is, therefore, no introduction to the main subject of the epistle, viz., to the purpose of showing Judaizing readers that the old dispensation is superseded. *It is that subject itself*, and the passage i. 4; ii. 16, is the construction of the first parallel of attack on the position the Author besieges, showing first that Christ is superior to angels, i. 4-13, and then that His agency counteracts the consequences of theirs. He has established that parallel, and now he uses the advantage to press an appropriate inference (vers. 17, 18) which, as is his wont, he follows with an earnest exhortation. The inference is as follows:

Ver. 17 a. Whence it behooved him to be made like his brethren in all respects.

The **whence** refers to the statement that Jesus "lays hold on a seed of Abraham." *His doing so involved the necessity of what is now stated.* For a necessity the Author affirms that it was by using the word *ᾧ*φειλεν. But presented thus, as the consequence of that free act by which the Son lays hold on a seed of Abraham to help them, the necessity is represented as a freely accepted one. At the same time, there is implied the truth that by this means and no other could the Son save men.

What was necessary was, that the Son should **become like his brethren in all respects**. The emphasis is on *κατὰ πάντα*, which brings in more than has already been affirmed, and is not to be understood as saying for substance the same as ver. 14. Besides "partaking of blood and flesh," the Author would here affirm that Jesus was made like His brethren in *every* respect, which is not necessarily involved in the previous statement, or at least might be overlooked by the readers. That Christ partook of blood and flesh made Him mortal along with others. But to say He was mortal does not involve that He was also subject to temptation. And without the latter He would not be made like his brethren in every respect. Hence the importance of this additional notion now introduced.

The Apostle's statement does not in the least involve the notion that Jesus became like His brethren in the matter of sinning, and there is no occasion here for expressly disclaiming that, as is done iv. 15. There is no express mention of the particulars in which He

became like them, so that there is no call to disclaim one erroneous inference more than another. The unreasonableness of such an inference might be repelled in a form like Paul's indignant language elsewhere: "How could He that came to free us from sin, Himself live in sin?"¹

The reason of this necessity of being made like His brethren in every respect is now added, just as in ver. 14 the reason is given why Jesus became like them in that partial respect (blood and flesh) mentioned there, viz.:

Ver. 17 b. **In order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to expiate the sin of the people.**

A difference appears between the purpose stated here, and that stated ver. 14 (both introduced by *iva*). In ver. 14 the Son's likeness to His brethren was in order that He might nullify their enemy; in other words, deliver them by removing something external to them. In the present verse, His likeness is represented to be in order that He might remove something that is part of themselves, viz., their sins. He became partaker of blood and flesh, *i. e.*, mortal, that He might be victorious over death.² He became *in every respect* like His brethren, that, being tempted, He might become a qualified High Priest to expiate their sins. "The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law."³

The Apostle says a **High Priest**, and not merely a priest. It is not merely to the priesthood of Christ that he now turns our attention; but to Christ as our High Priest. Thus the priestly acts to which he refers, and the qualifications he imputes to Christ as such, must be understood by what the scripture represents of the high-priestly character and functions, and not by the priestly character and functions in general.

The qualities here emphasized are, that He might become a **merciful and faithful** High Priest. **Merciful** is named first, and with such emphasis in the original, that **faithful**, *i. e.*, "reliable, to be trusted," appears as the consequence of it.

In iv. 14; v. 10, the Author amplifies the thought that he introduces by these words, and we may postpone our fuller con-

¹ Comp. Rom. vi. 2.

² Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 50-57.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 56.

sideration of it to that place. But in order to understand our present passage, it is important to anticipate here that, as the later passage shows, the likeness now pointed to is one that brings the Son into perfect "sympathy" with His brethren as persons "compassed with infirmity," and enables Him to "bear gently with the ignorant and erring," because "he hath been in all points tempted like as we are." The Son was made like his brethren in every respect *in order that he might become* all this as their High Priest. The Apostle says: **might become**. It is common to ask in this connection: *when did Christ begin to be High Priest?*¹ Some suppose that the text signifies that it was when He was exalted to heaven where He began to minister in the true sanctuary which the Lord pitched.² But the Apostle's representations, v. 1-3, show that the condition of being "compassed with infirmity," was essential to Christ's high-priestly character, and was antecedent to His offering the sacrifice that expiated sin, as the same was true of every high priest (v. 1). That condition began when the Son "was made like his brethren in every respect," and that was when He became man. He became High Priest when He was made something expressly in order to His acting as High Priest. He was so made in a most essential quality when He was made like His brethren in every respect.³

He became a High Priest in things pertaining to God,⁴ says the Apostle, thus denoting the respect in which he would have the reader contemplate this high-priestly function, viz., in respect to God above.⁵ What that is, precisely, he explains in the following clause: **to expiate the sins of the people**.

The word *ἱλάσσεσθαι* has nowhere in Scripture the meaning common to profane Greek, as if God were made propitious toward sinners (much less toward sin itself) by some sacrifice.⁶ Moreover, the *general* phrase: **in things pertaining to God**, (*τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*), seems to be used by the Author expressly to obviate such

¹ Comp. Davidson *in loc*.² viii. 2 sqq.³ Comp. Davidson.⁴ Comp. v. 1; Rom. xv. 17.⁵ von Hof.⁶ See Del. Comp. Richm. "Der Begriff der Sühne im. A. Test. Stud. u. Krit. 1877, I.

a notion here. Also the statement of ver. 10 precludes such a notion in the present connection. The context of our expression shows that both Father and Son were agents in what is here called **expiating sins**. It is the sins themselves that are dealt with. What is effected is, that they are "put away,"¹ and that those who are guilty of them are cleansed² from them. By saying that the Son **expiated the sins**, the Author means to express that it was done by a sacrifice; as also it must be;³ and, having pointed to the Son as High Priest, he thus expresses that He was such for the purpose of doing what only a priest could properly do, viz., offer sacrifice.

The High Priest is said to expiate **the sins of the people**.⁴ Following, as this does, the statement of ver. 16, viz., that "Jesus laid hold of a seed of Abraham," **the people** can only mean *the covenant people* of God, in the usual Old Testament sense.⁵ Moreover, this agrees with what has been already noticed⁶ of the Author's manner of addressing himself to Jewish readers, and confining the immediate scope of his teaching to their point of view. By **the sins of the people**, then, is meant not simply what would be meant by the sins of men expressed generally. It means what that expression would suggest to an Israelite when, not his sins in particular, but his sins as one of the covenant people would be referred to. In other words, it is the same notion that would be called up by the language of Jeremiah, quoted viii. 12; x. 17. "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This involves the notion of that "word" of commandments and prohibitions "spoken by angels," and the "transgression and disobedience" (ver. 2) which determined the condition of **the people** previous to the revelation by the Son who brings salvation. In that condition **the sins of the people** were the chiefest and first thing to be remembered. The work of the Saviour and of salvation must be to cause them to be remembered no more. That must be effected by an expiation of the sins; and to do that for a *whole people* the Saviour must be a High Priest.

Again, the suddenness with which the Apostle introduces this

¹ ix. 26.² ix. 14.³ ix. 22.⁴ Comp. xiii. 12.⁵ Comp. iv. 9; v. 3; vii. 11, 27; ix. 7.⁶ *c. g.* at ii. 2, 3.

new subject, viz., Christ as High Priest, must impress every reader. Some¹ think this is without adequate preparation; and in reply to this the effort is made by others² to show that such representations as "cleansing sins" (i. 3), "sanctifying" (ii. 11), and the mediatorial "leadership" in the work of salvation (ii. 10), as priestly acts and offices, and the death of Christ for every one (ii. 9) as a sacrificial death, fairly introduce the present theme. But the effort is not satisfactory. It is evident that the new subject *is* introduced as new, and without mediation.³ We can say, however, that death and sin are but segments of the same circle, and the mention of one calls up the notion of the other. Accounting for the removal of the one will naturally be associated with the account of the removal of the other. Hezekiah exclaims: "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." (Isa. xxxviii. 17.) Deliverance from death demands the removal of sins. The removal of sins demands a priest and a sacrifice. Hence the Author fittingly, without preface, introduces Jesus, our High Priest as his next subject. Its amplification is taken up at iv. 14 sqq. For the present the Apostle states only one comprehensive truth involved in that high priesthood as just described.

Ver. 18. **For in that he has suffered being tempted himself, he is able to succour them that are tempted.**

For introduces an explanation of how Jesus became "merciful," and consequently "faithful," as affirmed 17 *b*. It was by **being tempted himself**. And the notion "faithful," *i. e.*, reliable, is resumed and reiterated in the expression: **he is able to succour them that are tempted**; and so the clause introduced by **For** is equally explanatory of that. What is meant by the "ability" and the "tempting" mentioned here must appear from the foregoing explanatory clause. Christ "was tempted himself" (aorist participle), and "has suffered" (perfect) a suffering, indeed, as the perfect intimates, that is a thing of the past. From the immediately preceding reference to Christ as expiating sin (ver. 16), and the previous use of the word "to suffer," as referring to

¹ *e. g.* de Wette.

² *e. g.* Del.

³ So von Hof.

Christ's death (ii. 9, 10; comp. v. 8), we must understand: **has suffered** to refer here to the same thing. This shows that "the temptation" now mentioned relates to death, and means what those endured who apprehended death. Such "temptations" Christ himself endured before he suffered death, as the Apostle explicitly shows at v. 7.¹ He does not mean that the actual dying was the temptation,² as will appear when we come to examine v. 7, 8. So, too, the temptations of **those that are tempted** are from the apprehension of death, not their dying itself. It is not merely his **being tempted** that makes Christ able to succour the tempted. It is the twofold fact, viz., that He was tempted by the apprehension of death, and has suffered death, that makes Him able. The emphasis, however, of the present statement rests on: **being tempted**, which thus involves connecting *αὐτὸς* with *πειρασθεὶς*, **being tempted himself**.³

The evidence that such is the emphasis, is: (a) that there would be no progress in the thought of the context, if the text affirmed that, by having suffered death, Christ is able to succour, as much having been already affirmed, vers. 10 and 14, 15; (b) the statement of ver. 17, with which this is logically connected, viz., that Christ became a *merciful* High Priest. As the Apostle shows at iv. 15; v. 1, 2, it was by undergoing temptation that Christ became sympathetic, and, in that sense, compassionate.

We can now determine in what sense the Apostle here ascribes to Christ **ability to succour**. The **succour** is to **them that are tempted** by the apprehension of death. This subject, viz., his readers as Israelites, and the point of view from which they are contemplated, remains the same as in all the previous context from ver. 1. They are those who need to escape the consequence of transgression and disobedience (ver. 2); who, on account of the sufferings of death have not their predestined glory and honor, or world to come, and need a Saviour, who, by suffering death, will secure for them that world-to-come (ver. 9); who were all their lives subject to the fear of death (ver. 15).

As has been said, there is no change in the subjects of the

¹ Comp. Luke xxii. 28., *ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου*.

² Against Del.

³ So Lün., Del., Alford.

saving grace here referred to, or in the point of view in which they are contemplated. But the Saviour Himself is represented in another aspect. As a suffering Saviour, He has been portrayed from ver. 9 onward, including the present text. But that suffering is represented in different relations. In vers. 11-13 it is condescension to the same lot and condition with His brethren. In ver. 14, that suffering of death nullifies the danger of those brethren *ab extra*, by nullifying the devil's power of death. In ver. 17, the same suffering nullifies the danger *ab intra*, by expiating the sins of the people, *i. e.*, brethren. In the present verse (taken with ver. 17 *b*, viz., the representation of Christ as merciful and faithful), that suffering, preceded as it was by being Himself tempted, shows that Christ **is able to succour** *as one is only able to do who has himself experienced the same trouble* that now appeals to Him for help. This is called "ability" in Christ, with the same propriety that in iv. 15, it is denied of Him that He "cannot (*μη δύναμενον*) sympathize;" and affirmed of Him, v. 2, that He "can (*δυνάμενος*) bear gently with the ignorant and erring."

The Apostle affirms that Jesus **is able to succour them that are tempted** (*δύναται . . . πειραζομένοις*, in the present tense). The condition of temptation continues, and is the condition of those on whom the Apostle presses the Saviour. Hence, he presents Jesus as able to save now. He is able now; **for**, though His sufferings are past and He is at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty, He Himself was tempted.

Having now set forth the superiority of the Son to all other foregoing agents of revelation, expressly His superiority to angels (chap. i.), and then represented the revelation of the Son as a salvation, and set forth the greatness of it (chap. ii.), the Author now proceeds to direct attention to *the person* of this Son, Jesus, whom he has presented as a High Priest.

III. 1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus.

Wherefore, refers to the preceding context from i. 1 to the present, as appears from the way of stating the object who is to be considered, viz., Jesus. For He is described in terms that

recapitulate the contents of what has been said to the present point. As Lüneman explains: "When the Author says: **Therefore, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession**, it is only a Greek way of saying: Therefore, because Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, consider Him well." Jesus is appropriately called **Apostle**, as being the agent sent forth to speak for God, and this title resumes the Author's representation of Him in chap. i. It is the only instance of His being so called in scripture. And it may be noted, that the other agents of revelation, with whom He is there compared, are all but called apostles also (*ἀποστελλόμενα*), i. 14. And Jesus is expressly called **high priest** at ii. 17, as the comprehensive expression of that which He does in effecting "so great salvation."

The terms also in which the Author addresses his readers: **holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling**, reflect what has been represented in chaps. i. and ii. concerning the objects of Christ's saving work. **Brethren**, echoes the "many sons" and "my brethren" and "children," of ii. 10, 12, 13; and **holy** echoes the sentiment of "sanctifier" and "those that are sanctified," ii. 11. Thus says Delitzsch, who also continues: "The second term of the address: **partakers of a heavenly calling**, carries us back to i. 1 and ii. 3. The one calling, thus referred to, is the eternal Son,¹ through whom God has now spoken, who came from heaven, and is returned thither. And hence the **calling**, coming through Him and manifested on earth, is heavenly (comp. *ἡ ἀνω κλησις*, Phil. iii. 14); that is, a call issuing from heaven and inviting to heaven: its contents, the place whence it proceeds, and that to which it invites, all heavenly."

In Rom. ix. 3 Paul calls the Israelites "my brethren." He did the same in the address in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia. And on the other hand, he "and his company" were on the same occasion addressed by the rulers of the synagogue: "Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." (Acts xiii. 15.) Such was also Peter's mode of addressing his Jewish auditors on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 29).

¹ But on this see below.

This use of the term **brethren**, antedates the use of it as expressive of Christian fellowship. It is as fellow Israelites that Paul here calls his readers **brethren**. He calls them **holy**, according to the well-known scriptural authority to which Peter appeals: "But like as he which called you is holy, be ye also holy, in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 15, 16; comp. Lev. xi. 44, 45; xix. 2; xx. 7, 8, 26.) This, as something well understood, warranted the Author above in referring to the same objects as "them that are sanctified," and to Jesus as the "sanctifier" (ii. 11), without further explanation.

Partakers of a heavenly calling, suggests the question: *who is the subject that calls?* "The subject (of *καλέω* = *to call*), is everywhere God; who is also termed *ὁ καλῶν*, Rom. viii. 11; Gal. v. 8, *ὁ καλέσας*, 1 Pet. i. 15, comp. v. 10."¹ The present text is not an exception, and in this particular, the language of Delitzsch, quoted above, is misleading. It is as members of a people called of God to be holy that the Apostle addresses his readers as "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling."

This whole descriptive title, which includes the Apostle and his readers, defines the "*us*" and "*we*," i. i.; ii. 1, 3. Being, as it is, the proper designation for those that were the covenant people of God, it shows that our Author treats his readers as such, without regard to any distinction between Jews and Christians; in other words, he treats them as Peter did the same people on the day of Pentecost when he would persuade them to receive and believe on their Messiah.

The Apostle, however, addresses them here as those that actually believed. Thus, he says: "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." By this he designates Jesus, so described, as the one that is the contents of the confession that Christians call *theirs*, in the same sense that, in the mouth of a Jew, *ἡ ἡμετέρα θρησκεία* = "our religion" (Acts xxvi. 5), is that form of worship, that the Jew shares with his people.² Jesus holds the place of Apostle and High Priest in our confession—where *our* is emphatic,

¹ Cremer's Lex. *sub voce*; comp. Meyer on Gal. i. 6.

² So von Hof.

denoting antithesis to the confession in which Moses held so high a place.¹

Presenting **Jesus** thus for consideration, as **the apostle and high priest** of their confession, the Apostle gives *the two heads of the following discourse* to chap. x. 18.² Under the head **Jesus our apostle** we have iii. 2-iv. 13. Under the head **Jesus, our high priest**, we have iv. 14-x. 18.

Considering Jesus as the confessed Apostle of his readers, *Paul compares Him with Moses*. Our reason for thinking that the comparison touches only Jesus as Apostle, is that nothing pertaining to His high-priestly functions comes under review; as, indeed, there could not, seeing Moses' was no priest. Again he introduces a new subject without preface, and without pause in his sentence, just as he does the angels, i. 4, and the High Priest ii. 17. The reasons in the present case are as obvious as in the former. Jews called themselves Moses' disciples;³ and justly, for, as Paul says: their fathers were all baptized unto Moses.⁴ This might be pressed so as to seem in conflict with being a disciple of Christ. It lay, then, directly in the way of our Author to show that Christ is superior to Moses. This needed no preface. He therefore proceeds with an objective predicate participial clause that describes Jesus as:

Ver. 2. **Being [who is] faithful to him that made him, as also [was] Moses in all his house.**

A comparison of Num. xii. 7 shows that it was *God's house* in which **Moses was faithful**. The present words express no disparagement of Moses. In one respect, they express an exact likeness between Moses and Christ. Both were faithful to God, who, by circumlocution, is here designated as **him that made him**. The simplest explanation of this **making** (*ποιεῖν*) is, that God made each what he is represented in the context to be; Jesus an Apostle and High Priest; Moses, a servant in the house of God.

¹ Comp. Davidson.

² So M'Lean, after Calvin, iii. 1; iv. 14; against Bleek.

³ John ix. 28.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 2.

What they were when made is inseparable from the notion of them as made.¹

We might suppose that **the house of God** is meant as the sphere in which both Moses and Jesus displayed their faithfulness,² were it not that the following vers. 3-6 present a contrast between the two with respect to the house of God; and especially were it not that the notion is precluded by the proper understanding of what is meant by **the house of God**.

As the word **faithful** shows, the comparison in this case does not refer to revelation or speaking for God, as in the comparison with angels; but to *performance*. The statement of the text is, that Jesus *is* faithful now, as Moses *was* faithful. What is temporal in the statement must be determined by the subjects of which the text speaks. Moses belonged to the past; "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" belongs to the present. Moreover, the present is required by the statement of ver. 3, "has been counted worthy," etc., and of ver. 6, that the Apostle and his readers *are* the house over which Jesus is appointed. Jesus is said to be **faithful to him that made him**, as He is said to be a "High Priest in things pertaining to God," ii. 17, viz., in order to express, that in the direction toward God must appear the qualification and performance that is essential to His being a perfect Apostle and High Priest for men. This emphasis in the direction of God seems intentional, as if to mark an antithesis to ii. 9-18, which represents the relation of Jesus in the direction of men and what makes Him a "faithful High Priest" (ii. 17), with reference to them.

It is obvious, however, that if it were only the Author's intention to emphasize that Jesus must be qualified to be our Apostle in the direction toward God, he could do this more naturally than by the singular phrase: **to him that made him**. This

¹ So *e. g.*, Farrar; who, notwithstanding, brings the grave charge that our phrase, and so our whole epistle, by the erroneous interpretation of our phrase, "lent itself with so much facility to the misinterpretation of heresy, that it acted as one of the causes which delayed the general acceptance of the Epistle by the Church." So the lamb lent itself to the malice of the wolf!

² So Del.

prompts the inquiry: *why does He use this expression?* The solution appears in the following verse. The Apostle is comparing Moses and Jesus with the intention of affirming the superiority of the latter, which he affirms in ver. 3, by saying, **He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.** It prepares the way for that affirmation to remind the reader, that *God was the Maker of both.* The distinction in their official functions and difference in glory is thus referred to the sovereign will of Him who made them the functionaries they were and are: He accounted the one more glorious than the other. Such is the Apostle's motive in saying: "He was faithful to Him that made Him," instead of saying simply: "He was faithful to God." When he uses a circumlocution for God, as he often does, the Apostle intends breviloquence.¹

For the comparison he is making, in order to affirm the superiority of Jesus, the Author mentions Moses in the most favorable light. For by the obvious reference to Num. xii. 7, he calls to mind the occasion when Moses received from God the most honorable vindication of all his life. Even Aaron and Miriam were signally rebuked for their pretension to some equality with Moses in the administration of the affairs of Israel. That event left Moses indisputably supreme, under God, in all the house of God, both on account of actual appointment and on account of being found faithful.

By **my house**, in Num. xii. 7,² can only be meant the same thing that Moses means when he speaks of "the house of Jehovah."³ By that is always meant the Tabernacle. The rarity of the expression in the Pentateuch shows that it did not grow to any wider meaning. After the Temple was built, it meant the Temple. Yet though, after that event, the expressions: "house of the Lord;" "of God;" "Thy house;" "His house;" "My house," occur with great frequency, the meaning is never extended beyond

¹ Comp. on ii. 10.

² Comp. Lange on Num. xii. 7, in the Lange-Schaff. Bib. Work.

³ Comp. Exod. xxiii. 19; Deut. xxiii. 18 (19). In the Pentateuch, these, with Num. xii. 7, are the only instances. Joshua vi. 24; ix. 23.

a reference to the Temple; except as the Temple may represent the cultus of Jehovah.¹

In the quotation of our text, and with reference to Moses, **his house** means the Tabernacle. This precludes the notion entertained by many,² that the house of God, as here mentioned, is the common sphere wherein Moses and Jesus displayed fidelity. It is of Moses alone that it is stated, that he was faithful to Him that made him **in all his house**. The **all** may be supposed to have no importance in the present context beyond being part of the language quoted. But the recurrence of "the house" in the following verse intimates that the Author's mention here of **his (God's) house**, is with a purpose. The LXX. rendering of Num. xii. 7 reads: *Μωϋσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ μου πιστός ἐστι*, where *ἐν ὅλῳ τ. οἴκῳ μου* has the emphasis, owing to its having precedence in the sentence. Here the *emphásis* remains the same by the omission *πιστόν ὄντα*, in the second clause. This calls attention to the sphere of the display of Moses' faithfulness as **his (God's) house**. It appears in the sequel that the Author means to press the notion of God's propriety in that house. This he does in the following verse in connection with affirming the superiority of Jesus to Moses.

Ver. 3. **For this person (οὗτος) has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, according as he that prepared it [the house] has more honor than the house.**

For refers to the exhortation of ver. 1, and brings forward another reason for considering "the Apostle of our confession," in addition to the reason comprised in the reference of *οθεν*, "wherefore." That reason is the greatness of Jesus as the Apostle of God compared with Moses. The Author *affirms* that Jesus *is* superior in honor to Moses. He affirms *this* dogmatically, *i. e.*, without proof. This, we observed, was his manner of affirming the superiority of the Son to angels (i. 4). But the statement here is not simply that Jesus *is* more glorious. It is affirmed that *He was counted worthy of more glory*. This manner of expression calls attention to the active subject of the predicate **counted worthy**, which is God, or more expressly (resuming the

¹ *e. g.*, Ps. lxix. 10; Hos. viii. 1; ix. 15.

² Del. von Hof., etc.

language of the ver. 2), *He that made both Jesus and Moses*. Thus the Author expressly refers the comparative greatness of Jesus and Moses, to the sovereign will of Him who made both, and to whom both were to be faithful. The perfect tense, **hath been counted**, denotes that the effect still remains. The **glory**,¹ means "that official 'glory' or 'honor' in which the Lord Jesus excels Moses."²

The following clause³ is meant to justify that sovereign discretion to which, by the expression: **was counted worthy**, the greater glory of Jesus is referred. By καθ' ὅσον without its correlative κατὰ τοσοῦτο⁴ is not denoted a measure; but as at ix. 27, it denotes: **according as**. Thus the Author adds: **According as he that preparereth the house has more honor than the house**. The subject of prepared is God, as the statement of ver. 5: "He that prepared all things is God," requires. Moreover, we notice that ἐπιτελεῖν and ποιεῖν are used for Moses' performance in the construction of the Tabernacle (viii. 5), while as again in ix. 2, 6, κατασκευάζειν is used (as ἡζήτωται here), so as to require us to understand God as the active subject. The use of τιμή = **honor**, instead of δόξα = **glory**, shows that something else is meant than comparison.⁵ For glory would be compared with glory.⁶ The obvious fact that **the preparer of the house has more honor than the house**, justifies him that prepared it in doing with it what he pleases. **The house** intended (as the article defines it), is the

¹ Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 7-11.

² Del.

³ The following clause does not give a measure of the comparative superiority of Jesus, as has been universally supposed. The difficulties of that view have been universally felt by all that have adopted it. To maintain it, we must explain why the καθ' ὅσον is not attended by the correlative κατὰ τοσοῦτο; why τιμή is used instead of δόξα; how God's having more honor than the house *He* prepared, can *measure* the superiority of Jesus to Moses; or (if it is assumed that the Author means that Jesus is the preparer of the house; so Davidson), how that comports with the saying, that "God prepares all things;" and finally what logical force there is in the truism: "Every house is prepared by some one." In view of these difficulties, the common interpretation of the clause in question must be regarded as hopelessly obscure. That which is proposed above is not without difficulty and obscurity. It is nevertheless that to which the foregoing context seems to lead up.

⁴ Comp. vii. 20.

⁵ Against Davidson.

⁶ Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41.

house just named, in which Moses was faithful, and which is called God's house. It is referred to as something that *was prepared* (aorist participle). This, especially taken in such close connection with the perfect (**has been counted worthy of more honor,**) intimates that it is a thing of the past. And coupled as "his house" (bear in mind the expression of ownership,) is with Moses, both are included in the affirmation that Jesus has been counted worthy of more honor. For Moses and his glory cannot be thought of without the house in which he was faithful.

We have here, let it be noted, a future theme of the Author's (viz., that the Tabernacle prepared at Sinai yields to the heavenly sanctuary in which Christ ministers), which the Author treats of viii. 5 sqq. It is introduced not only as angels at i. 4, and the High Priest ii. 17, *i. e.*, suddenly, without preface, but also, as we shall have occasion to notice about other themes, in a way that does not immediately awake attention or suggest the importance the Author attaches to it.

Ver. 4. **For every house is prepared by some one, but God [is] he that prepared [the]¹ all things.**

The logical connection of this utterance is difficult to detect. The history of its interpretation² shows that such was the case back to the earliest specimens of exegesis that we possess from the Greek fathers. It is true that there was considerable unanimity among the ancient expositors in regarding **God** as predicate and *ὁ πάντα κατασκευάζων* as a designation of Christ, thus making the passage a proof of the deity of Christ.³ But there is quite as much unanimity among modern expositors in rejecting this interpretation. The latter fact, therefore, represents the prevalent opinion to be, that even the earliest Greek expositors failed to detect the logical connection and force of our ver. 4. The view taken of the foregoing verse 3 must control the interpretation of this one.

The **For** refers to the statement of ver. 3 *b*, ("according as he that prepared the house," etc.), that justifies the sovereign discretion which counts one worthy of more glory than another. The first clause of our verse is a truism. That does not need to make

¹ τὰ Text. Recep.

² See in Alford.

³ *Ibid.*

it sound flat, any more than the utterance of the dilemma: "It is, or it is not," so often used in argument. Let a truism be well pointed and nothing is more expressive. On the other hand, if we miss the point, nothing can sound more flat. If the utterance of the present truism sounds flat to us, we may blame our own want of penetration, and wish the Author had written more lucidly; but we cannot impute dulness to him, whose work before us gives so many proofs of extraordinary acuteness.

The truism of our verse seems to be adduced in support of the foregoing thought as explained above. Every house is prepared by some one, and the house in which Moses was faithful was no exception. This expresses the notion that it is not a thing of necessary existence, but subject to the will of him that prepared it. Thus the glory of Moses, that was inseparably connected with the house in which he was faithful, was a prepared thing, just as the house was. We find in this a representation very necessary to be pressed on Israelites, that were used to contemplate the Mosaic economy, which centered in the Tabernacle or Temple, as something to last forever. Nor could they be better attacked on that subject than by such a truism as that of the text. Moreover, we find in this interpretation the preparation for the direct representation the Author will presently make, viz., that the Tabernacle, with all pertaining to it, was in prophecy, as it is now actually in fact, treated by God as something that grew old and ready to vanish away (viii. 16).

The thought thus intimated by one truism, viz., what was true of any house, just because a house, is reinforced by another, that is still more comprehensive of the same thought, viz.: **But God (is) he that prepared all things.** In this sentence God is subject.¹ The argument is *a fortiori*. The sovereign discretion, that counts one worthy of more than another, is justified by the consideration that God was the preparer of the house that was identified with the glory of Moses. But it is still more justified by the fact that God was the preparer of all things. The **all things** must be understood in a universal and indefinite way.

The affirmation that Jesus *was counted* worthy of more glory

¹ See Lün.

than Moses, so far as it affirms that He *is* more glorious, is made dogmatically, just as the important doctrinal items concerning the Son in i. 1-4. The doctrinal status of the readers justified this. But so far as it affirmed that *God counted him worthy of more glory*, the Author has supported the affirmation by considerations that vindicate the divine discretion in this matter. He now points to a distinction between Moses and Jesus that *illustrates* the superiority of the latter to the former; not, however, in all its breadth, but in one comprehensive particular. This is presented in vers. 5, 6, which are joined to the context by *καί* = **and** in its simple conjunctive sense as bringing in something additional. First, he says of Moses:

Ver. 5. **And Moses, indeed, [was] faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimony of those things that shall be spoken of.**

The *μὲν* = **indeed**, to be followed by its correlative *οὐδὲ* = **but**, marks the utterance of an antithesis, which must be pointed by an emphasis on the contrasted notions in the two representations. In the present verse that emphasis falls on: **in**, and: **as a servant**; and in the following verse on: **over**, and: **as a son**. The original, as is easily permitted by its idiom, gives no temporal expression to the predicate **faithful** as we are compelled to do in the translation by **was faithful**, and **is faithful**. Thus the notion of time is no part of the contrast. It may even be that, by eluding a reference to time, the Author would represent both on one plane, as at ix. 8, 9, he represents kindred notions, using the present tense; where, after a description of the Tabernacle as it "was prepared," he says: "The Holy Spirit, this signifying" (present participle), etc., and: "Which (is) a parable for the time now present." This might be construed as the present of the fact as it appears contemplated in the scripture.¹

Reiterating in this way the faithfulness of Moses, he says with emphasis, that he was faithful in the whole house of God, thus representing him, not as constituting a part of the house,² which is incompatible with the facts relating to the Tabernacle, but as circumscribed and limited by that house, so that his functions and influence were coterminous with it; at least so far as they

¹ So Lün.

² Against Del., Lün., etc.

are described in the following clause. In accordance with that, or rather as defining what was involved by : **in the house**, the Author adds : **as a servant**. "The LXX. purposely renders עֶבֶד here by another word than δοῦλος or παῖς (the renderings most frequently employed), in order to exclude the notion of unfree, slavish dependence, from which *θεράπων*, in the oldest Greek, is exempt."¹ But though *slavish* dependence is excluded, dependence is not ; and the scope of Moses' ministry, as defined by : **in the whole house**, is represented as limited to that sphere. This is expressly represented by the explanatory clause that follows : **for a testimony of those things that shall be spoken of**. Moses was minister in the Tabernacle **for a testimony**. As he performed no service in or about it (that being the province of the Levites and priests), the reference can only be to his agency in making it, with all its appointments complete, and instituting the priesthood with their services. And all this performance must be meant as furnishing the **testimony** referred to. That **testimony** is identified by the Author with Moses as an active agent in respect to the Tabernacle. It can have no reference, then, to the *promulgation* of the law,² which had no special connection with the Tabernacle ; nor to additional and ampler revelations to be given,³ which had as little connection with the Tabernacle. The only notion we are acquainted with that answers to the present expression, is the typical significance of the Tabernacle, with all its belongings, as unfolded by our Author in chap. viii. and onward. And such is his meaning when he says Moses ministered in the house of God **for a testimony of the things that shall be spoken of**.

Things to which Moses' ministry was a testimony, the Author, for the present, designates as **the things that shall be spoken of**, (τῶν λαληθησομένων, fut. pass. participle). No one besides Pareus (and perhaps Lindsay) seems to have taken this expression in its literal rendering. It has been common, contrary to grammar, to take this future participle in the sense of "would be," or "were to be spoken." Pareus interprets the expression as meaning "the things to be spoken by us in this epistle concerning the cere-

¹ Del.² Against de Wette, Lün., etc.³ Against Stuart, Davidson.

monies and their meaning." And such is the only admissible rendering. As the Author says, ii. 5: "The world to come of which we speak (*ἀλλοῦ*)," because the subject was actually a matter of discourse; so he says here: **things that shall be spoken of** (*τῶν ἀλλήθῃσοιμένων*), because he is not at the point where he would make them a matter of discourse. He comes to that point in chap. viii. Similarly at ix. 5, he says: "of which things we cannot now speak (*λέγειν*) severally," because he does not purpose to speak of them in detail at all. Understanding the text thus, we find in it corroboration of the fact noted above under ver. 3, that the Author has actually broached a topic that he intends to make a matter of particular discourse.

But with this understanding of **the things that shall be spoken of**, we see that the clause appears in the sentence in a very unemphatic way, as expressing that **the testimony** was to things of importance, indeed, but too complex to be expressed in this connection. This leaves the expression: "**as a servant for a testimony**," in emphatic isolation to point the contrast with: "**as a son**," in the next verse.

The interpretation just given of *τῶν ἀλλήθῃσοιμένων*, ought to meet with the more approval, because by a direct grammatical construction it attains the result that has been adopted by the majority of the best commentators, viz., that by: **the things to be spoken** the Author refers to the gospel of the New Testament, and to that exclusively,¹ but which result they reach, either by a leap, or by much artful reasoning.² Moreover, entertaining this result, it is, after all, chiefly the things of the gospel as testified to by the typical things of the Old Testament, that these commentators understand, though they admit also direct testimony to the Messiah. When we remember, that we are indebted almost wholly to the present epistle for the knowledge of how the Tabernacle types testified to the gospel, this result issues in the same thing as has been reached by the interpretation given above, viz., that Moses testified to the things that our Author will speak of later in his epistle.

¹ Del., von Hof., Alford, Wolf, Calvin, etc.

² See e. g., Alford.

Ver. 6. **But Christ as a Son over his house, which house we are :**

It is thus the Apostle presents Jesus in antithesis to Moses as described in the foregoing verse. In doing so he calls Him Christ (for the first time in the epistle). It is proper to suppose that this is done on purpose. It is the name of Jesus as the promised Messiah ; and it is as the Messiah that He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. We must supply the predicate "is faithful" to this mention of Christ, with no stress on the copula "is," as has been noted under the foregoing verse. **Christ (is) faithful as a Son over his (God's) house** is the present statement, with emphasis on **a Son** and **over**, as contrasted with "a minister" and "in" of the foregoing verse. The antithesis thus presented, without anything more to point it than that presented by the words themselves, is the same as that presented in the parable of The Wicked Husbandmen, between "servants" (*δούλους*) and "his son," and that there justify the sentiment : "They will reverence My Son," Matt. xxi. 37. There, too, the husbandmen say of the Son : "This is the heir." Our Author, in i. 12, has presented the same notions as inseparable in Christ, by calling Him "a Son whom He has made heir of all things."¹

This comprehensive notion of the Son is to be retained here, and that justifies the statement that He is **over** the house of God and not "in" it. He is faithful **over the house** of God as something committed to His discretion like the "good and faithful servant that was faithful over a few things" (*ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἡς πιστός*), (Matt. xxv. 21).

The antithesis now presented is complete in the terms : "Moses, as a minister, in the house of God," and : "Christ, as a Son, over the house of God." But as the notion of Moses as a minister, is supplemented by defining his ministry as a testimony of the things that shall be spoken of further on in this epistle, so the notion of Christ as a Son in this antithesis, is supplemented by defining the house over which He is. **Whose house we are**, adds the Apostle. We may suppose² that there is intended here

¹ See this comment above, *in loc.*

² With Del., who ascribes the view to Ebrard.

“a latent parallel between: ‘for a testimony of the things that shall be spoken of,’ and: **whose house we are.**” For the two expressions actually refer to the same notion in the mind of the Author. That intended by the former expression has been stated above. What is meant by the latter requires particular definition.

The house referred to in: **whose house**, is God’s, as in the foregoing context. Nor are we to surrender here the understanding, that by the house of God, is meant the Tabernacle, except as the Author’s present statement exchanges another notion for that. What he affirms is, that now the house of God is no longer the Tabernacle, but the body of true believers in Christ. It is because this point has been missed, that so much confusion and disagreement has appeared amongst commentators with reference to what is meant by the house of God in the foregoing context. The obvious meaning of the present text, which affirms that believers are the house of God, has influenced all to understand that the same notion is meant by **the house of God** in Num. xii. 7, as cited in ver. 2. But this is overlooking the fact that *it is peculiarly a New Testament revelation* that God’s people are themselves God’s house. And this is not an old fact set in a new light. It is the revelation of a new fact that distinguishes the new dispensation from the old. It does not appear in the Old Testament except as a prophecy of what shall be in the New Testament dispensation. Comp. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Ezek. xxxvii. 26–28; and Rev. xxi. 3. Moreover, as so prophesied, it needed the inspired teachings of Christ’s apostles to bring out the truth of what was foretold.¹ To suppose that Israelites would understand by “the house of God,” the people of God, is to impute to the Apostle’s present readers an understanding of the truth that would make much of what he teaches in this epistle gratuitous labor. Men whose notion of God’s house had become so enlarged, would have been in little danger of thinking that true worship of God could only be rendered at the Tabernacle, or its successor, the Temple.

The novelty and unfamiliarity of this New Testament fact, is

¹See below on Lev. xxvi. 12; and 2 Cor. vi. 16.

intimated in Paul's exclamation : " Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God ? " 1 Cor. vi. 19. But the classic passages are Ephes. ii. 20-22 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16. The latter passage will better serve our purpose in the present connection. There Paul says : " For we are the temple of the living God ; even as God said : I will dwell in them and walk in them ; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. " He quotes the language of Lev. xxvi. 12. But it is language repeatedly quoted by the prophets, with reference to the new dispensation ; amongst others by Jer. xxxi. 1, 33. This prophecy is quoted by our Author twice in the present epistle (viii. 10 ; x. 16), as descriptive of the new dispensation in contrast with the old. If Paul be (as we have assumed), the Author of our epistle, we must take it for granted that he understands the words in Jer. xxxi. 1, 33, as he does in their original place in Lev. xxvi. 12, when he applies them in 2 Cor. vi. 16. But if one should admit another author than Paul, yet an inspired writer, the conclusion must still be the same. That meaning is, that now true believers are what formerly the Tabernacle was, viz., the house or Temple of God. (*ναὸς θεοῦ*, " sanctuary of God. ")

The foundation of this Christian conception of the Temple or house of God, and of the interpretation of the prophecies relating to it, is such teaching of Christ as John xiv. 23. " If a man love me, he will keep my word ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. " Comp. John xvii. 21, 23. Its development by His inspired Apostles is found 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 ; vi. 19 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16 ; Eph. ii. 22 ; 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; 1 Pet. ii. 5 ; iv. 17. It is affirmed also in our text, but receives no extended development in our epistle. Yet the Author recurs again to the thought of the substitution of true believers for the Tabernacle in what he says chap. xiii. 12. There he represents, that as, on the day of atonement, the high priest sanctified the Tabernacle even to the sanctuary with the blood of the sin-offerings, so *Christ*, suffering without the gate, *sanctified His people* through His own blood. Thus Christians " have an altar of sacrifice, " that is not of the Tabernacle (xiii.

10). Thus, too, Christians, in that house of God which they constitute, by the confession of Christ as their High Priest, “offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name,” xiii. 15.

From this it appears, that, while the Author finds the anti-type of the Tabernacle and its appurtenances and their uses, in Christ Himself and in the heavenly realities where Christ has entered for us within the veil, he also represents the truth that Christians themselves are the temple of God.

The latent parallel between: “for a testimony of things that will be spoken of,” and: “whose house we are,” mentioned above, involves a contrast also, viz., that Moses was a minister in all God’s house, to represent by typical institutions (whose meaning the Author will proceed to give) that which is realized in the Christian dispensation. But Christ, as a Son, deals not with typical representations of the house of God, and of what concerns that house, but with the very house itself. Believers are that house of God. His blood actually cleanses and sanctifies them.

But the Apostle says, **we** are the house of God (not, that believers are), adhering thus to the subject as expressed in this epistle so far, viz., himself and his Jewish Christian readers, as in ver. 1. He qualifies that subject in the present passage by adding:

iii. 6 c. **If we hold steadfast the boldness, and the glorying of the hope until the end.**

We retain the clause *μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν*, **firm until the end**, as part of the genuine text, according to Lachman, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort. The editions last named, viz., Tr., W. and H., leave it undecided, the latter enclosing in brackets, and the former putting it in the margin. *Βεβαίαν* agreeing in gender with the remoter substantive, viz., *παρρησίαν*, as well as the precedence of *παρρησίας*. makes the latter word, **boldness** the more important of the conjoined notions, **boldness and glorying**.

By the present qualifying clause that defines who are indeed the house of God, the Author confines the designation to those of his readers that with himself are true believers. As is said:

"For they are not all Israel which are of Israel." Rom. ix. 6. Those that may truly be called the house of God, have a **hope** set before them. By this is not meant an inward feeling, but the thing in prospect that causes the feeling. (vi. 18.) This hope is only what it ought to be to those concerned when it inspires **boldness** in them. This boldness is in the direction toward God (comp. iv. 16), as the hope is a substance treasured up with God. It must be **steadfast** (βεβαίαν comp. ii. 2, 3), as the only fitting posture of the soul toward "a hope that is sure and steadfast" (vi. 19). Such a hope with its corresponding boldness must be a **boast** (καύχημα, not the same as καύχησις, the act of boasting, but the thing boasted). It is a hope that is a boast (τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος, genitive of apposition).¹ This boldness and boast *must be held fast* (if we hold) by those concerned. This designates the point for their active agency. The hope, as a substance, is steadfast in itself. The boldness and the making a boast of it are their part. They must hold to that, and do it **until the end** (comp. ver. 14), by which **end** is meant the goal when there is no more hope, but possession, because fulfillment has come; and thus the *μέχρι* is strictly temporal, and not denotive of measure or degree.² *Perseverance* in the graces here mentioned must characterize those that are the house of God. The present clause shows that the Apostle does not conceive the notion of a true believer complete, without the idea of his holding fast to his Christian character to the end. In other words, let him surrender this boldness and boast, and he proves that he *is* (ἔσμεν) not a constituent part of the house of God. Comp. vers. 12, 14; x. 39.

The qualification just added to the statement "whose house we are," moves the Apostle to give a warning that ought to influence his readers to hold fast the boldness and boast of their hope steadfast to the end.

Ver. 7. Wherefore, even as says the Holy Spirit: To-day if ye shall hear his voice, 8. harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, like as (in) the day of the temptation in the wilderness, 9. where your fathers tried by way of test, and saw my

¹ von Hof.² von Hof.

works forty years. 10. Wherefore, I was displeased with this generation and said: they ever err in heart; but they knew not my ways, 11, as I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.

The **wherefore**, ver. 7, connects with **take heed**, ver. 12,¹ and vers. 8-11, cite Old Testament scripture, which the Author purposes to use for warning, and also for additional instruction. The awkward length of sentence has been objected to this construction, as something "monstrous."² But, beside the appeal to vii. 20-22; xii. 18-24, as other instances of the sort, we notice that the Author actually uses the text now quoted in various applications down to iv. 10. Having in mind such use for these words, it does not appear how he could more happily introduce them.

The Author quotes Ps. xcv. 7-11, as rendered by the LXX., yet with some important variations from the original that must have an intentional significance. In ver. 9, instead of "where your fathers tempted me, tried me, and saw my works," he writes: **where your fathers tried by way of a test, and saw my works forty years**. In vers. 10 he adds a **wherefore** ($\delta\iota\acute{o}$) not found in the LXX. or in the Hebrew; and instead of "that generation" ($\xi\chi\sigma\iota\nu\eta$), he writes **this generation** ($\tau\alpha\acute{o}\tau\eta$).

As says the holy spirit; thus the Author expressly signifies that he appeals to the scripture in question as authority. This: **as saith** does not denote that he means to use the language in question as his own; and **harden not, etc.**, ver. 8, is not the Author's own warning introduced by **wherefore**.³ By these words he expressly represents that the scripture now quoted is the utterance of the Holy Spirit. It *was* when written; it *is* as it at present stands written. Yet quoting the familiar words, with changes that must have been instantly detected by his readers, he, in effect, comments while he quotes. In so far the Author uses the language as his own. The events of sacred history referred to by the Psalmist, are found recorded Exod. xvii. 1-7; Num. xx. 1-13. They both occurred early in the

¹ So Calvin, Pareus, Bengel, Lün., Alford, etc.

² Del.

³ Against Del.

wanderings in the wilderness, so that, as the Author with the Psalmist represents, the forty years of penalty might be spoken of as following them. For it is a mistake to suppose, as is commonly done, that the event narrated Num. xx. 1-13, occurred after the years of penalty had passed, and when the people were reassembling at Kadesh to start afresh for the conquest of Canaan. It occurred on or about their first arrival at Kadesh after the departure from Sinai.¹ The condemnation is recorded Num. xiv. 22 sqq.

It cannot be deemed an accident, as regards our context, that immediately preceding the words quoted from the Psalm, we read: "O come, let us worship and bow down; and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God; and we are his people and the sheep of his pasture," vers. 6, 7. For our Author has just said: "we are His house," and we have seen how, in 2 Cor. vi. 16, Paul founds this statement on the words of scripture: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," Lev. xxvi. 12. Moreover, the words: "the Lord our Maker," ver. 6 of the Psalm, remind us of the words: "him that made him," of our ver. 2. This coincidence of thought shows that the text the Author now quotes has a special fitness to his subject.

As has been said already, the changes that our Author makes in his text are in effect comments on it. They are, so to speak, comments by the way. While quoting the language, he adapts it, to give instant force to the warning, ver. 12, which is the first use he makes of it, and which he has, so to speak, on his lips, and hanging in suspense from the "wherefore," ver. 7. He does this without any violence to the substantial sense. The important statements that come out so clearly by the changes are thoroughly justified by the language, when rendered literally.

By the first of the changes noted above, viz., in ver. 9, the Apostle makes τὰ ἔργα μου the object of both ἐπείρασαν and εἶδον, and qualifies both by: **forty years**, saying: **your fathers tried and saw my works forty years.**² The Author shows at ver. 17 that he knew the correct reading.

By the second change, viz., the introduction at ver. 10 of δὲ,

¹ See Lange—Schaff Bib. Work, on Numbers, xx. 1-13.

² So von Hof.

wherefore, which connects with the statement just made, while at the same time it disconnects the: **forty years** from: **I was displeased**, he makes God's displeasure the effect of that forty years' trial, and the forty years' trial the justification for God's saying: **they ever err in their heart**. Moreover, the LXX. vary here from the Hebrew, which reads: "they are a people of wanderers in heart;" and varying again from the Hebrew: "and they know not my ways," the LXX. reads: ἀποτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν x. τ. λ. This disconnects these words from those immediately preceding, which recite what God formerly said, (καὶ εἶπον) and make them part of what God says in the inspired Psalm. This rendering our Author retains, and moreover changes the rendering of the LXX.: "*that generation*," to **this generation**. What the quoted language accordingly represents as the expression of the Holy Spirit is, that because of the forty years trial to which God was put, he was displeased lastingly, and said they ever err in heart, *i. e.*, pronounced them radically and inveterately gone astray; they on their part did not know His ways, *as* (= *just as*) He swore in His wrath (*viz.*, at the time of transgression) that they should not enter into His rest. This representation expressly precludes the notion that forty years measured the extent of God's anger. And the Apostle actually gives still greater precision to this representation by saying **this generation**, instead of "*that generation*;" for the latter phrase might be taken as the equivalent of forty years, like בְּרֹיֹךְ, and taken even more than the Hebrew, as expressly excluding application to the following generation that did enter Canaan. By writing: **this generation**, our Author extends the application even to the period of the Psalmist, as further appears, moreover, from his representing all, even to the present time, as under the operation of the oath of exclusion from God's rest. The rendering of the LXX. has the further effect of representing, that the observed fact (*viz.*, that the generation *did* not know God's ways) was in accordance with the foregoing oath that they should not enter into His rest. By "*my ways*" is meant the way God would have them go,¹ *viz.*, in order to enter his rest.

¹ So von Hof., Comp. Mic. iv. 2; Ps. li. 15.

All this interpretation our Author adopts in quoting the LXX.¹ "For it is for him of essential importance that the generation which, by unbelief and rebellion, had sinned against God at the beginning of the wandering, afterward, also, did not know the ways of God, and thereby confirmed the oath of God that they should not enter His rest."²

The Apostle has adduced a "scripture inspired of God," and the following context shows that his purpose is to make it "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness."³ His first use is for reproof and correction; and thus continuing the sentiment begun by **wherefore**, ver. 7, he says:

Ver. 12. **Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of perfidy, when there is a falling away from the living God; 13. but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day, in order that no one of you may be hardened by the deceit of sin.**

Addressing his readers as **brethren**, thus resuming the same notion as expressed in ver. 1, the Apostle points them to the danger of there **being in them an evil heart of perfidy**, by which he refers to the notion of "an ever erring heart" represented in his text, (ver. 10). *ἀπιστία* = "perfidy," see Grimm's Lex. He says not: lest there may be now, but with a future reference: **lest there shall be**, as denoting something that will reveal itself when the trial comes. That approaching trial he calls: **when**

¹ We may at this point remark once more on our Author's mode of quoting scripture. His quotation here is obviously in a fashion, and with adaptations to suit his purpose. Yet, appealing to it as authority, he expressly signifies that he does so, by a suitable formula: **as saith the Holy Spirit**. (Comp. ix. 8; x. 15.) There is nothing doubtful or ambiguous about his quotation. The passage is instantly identified. It is used in the plain meaning of the words in their original position. No canons of interpretation need be invented to account for meanings that the Author finds in it. These and the changes he makes on his original explain themselves, and are justified by the facts of the histories concerned, and by Moses' own reference to the same events. (Deut. vi. 16.) It is needless to say how different is the Author's manner in his use of scripture language, i. 5-14 and ii. 12, 13.

² von Hof.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

there is the falling away.¹ The future: **shall be** (ἔσται), requires us to take the following ἐν, of ἐν τῷ ἀποστήναι, in a temporal sense, as at ii. 8; moreover, ἐν with the substantive infinitive has the sense of “while,” “as,”² or “at the time when.”³ This future, moreover, determines the force of the 2 aor. inf. (ἀποστήναι) as meaning something in prospect.⁴ “Then our expression means the same thing that in 2 Thess. ii. 3 is called ἡ ἀποστασία. At 2 Thess. ii. 10, to those that have not received the love of the truth, the Apostle holds out the prospect that they will become a prey to Satan at the time of that apostasy that precedes the reappearing of Jesus; so here he would have heed taken, that, when it [that apostasy] comes about, there may not be among his readers such whose hearts are possessed of unbelief [or as we translate, perfdy].”⁵

The introduction of this idea of an apostasy is a natural progress of thought from the idea underlying the warning of ii. 1–3. What is common to both is, that the readers are contemplated as the same people of God as those of old, under the same ministry of a word spoken by angels. *There*, however, the warning was given from the point of view of those hearing the gospel as the offer of salvation; it was accordingly: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. *Here* the warning is to those that are regarded as having heard and accepted the heavenly calling, and confessed Jesus as their Apostle and High Priest (iii. 1). Unbelief in such would be apostasy. The only strange thing about the present expression is that it points to a definitely expected event of general apostasy. For, as the foregoing construction shows, such is the implied representation. It is even made more precise by the ἐν τινι ἑμῶν = **in any one of you**, which denotes, that it is not a question of whether or not there shall be such a thing as is here a subject of warning, but only whether or not it shall include some of those now warned. Moreover, the Author’s way of saying: **lest there shall be** (μήποτε ἔσται) ex-

¹ So von Hof., who, while justifying this meaning, clearly shows that ἐν cannot here introduce a phrase expegetical of ἀπιστίας.

² See e. g., Luke ix. 36.

³ See e. g., Matt. xiii. 25; Luke xvii. 11.

⁴ See Kühner Gram. II. p. 161.

⁵ von Hof.

presses the fear or probability that the very thing he would prevent will take place.

The sudden reference, without preface, to such an event as an anticipated apostasy, we have found to be quite in our Author's style. It's justification to his readers would be in the familiarity of such a subject in their circles. To us, who are making ourselves acquainted with those circles by means of the present writing, the reference must be justified by what shall further appear. If nothing shall appear to show that a definite and anticipated apostasy is in the Author's mind, then the above interpretation of ἐν τῷ ἀποστήναι must be a mistake, or at least doubtful. But we may by anticipation refer to vi. 8; x. 27, 39; xii. 25-27.

The Apostle warns against an evil that he calls: **falling away from the living God**. He thereby identifies its guilt and enormity with the temptation in the wilderness, of which his text speaks. It would be against the same God, who ever lives, and must be treated by him in the same way, because He is ever the same.

In the following verse 13 he enjoins what will guard against the impending danger of some of them being swept away. Let them **exhort one another day by day so long as it is called To-day**. The point of this admonition is in the second clause. **It is called To-day**, means "called out, sounded out,"¹ **To-day**. The further use of this **To-day** in the subsequent context² shows that the Author treats it as a proclamation. **So long as**, intimates that the calling out will cease, and so the **To-day** will come to an end. The Author, however, appeals to this **To-day** proclaimed in the Ps. xcv. as still in force. Because it is so, and while it is so, let them **exhort one another day by day**. This emphatic **day by day** seems to intimate that there were few days left of the period called **To-day**. In x. 25 this notion is actually expressed. The subject of exhortation must be, of course, that of the original text (ver. 9): "harden not your hearts," etc. But the Author expresses this as the effect of the exhortation: **in order that none of you may be hardened by the deceit of sin**. By **hardened** the analogy is pressed of the old transgression in the wilderness as expressed in the

¹ See καλέω in Grimm's Lex.

² Ver. 15; iv. 7.

Psalm, and the meaning is: "hardened as your fathers were," to put God to the test as they did, and to incur the penalty of His oath, (vers. 9-11.) By the form of expressing his thought, the Apostle represents what, in the case of his readers, would exert the hardening influence, viz., **deceit, or fraud of the sin.** "**The sin** (*τῆς ἀπορίας*) is here personified, comp. Rom. vii. 11. What is meant is the sin of falling back to the old cultus, and thereby apostasy from Christianity, to which sin they were allured by the illusive splendor of the old cultus.¹ In 2 Thess. iii. 10, to which we appealed above, Paul speaks of the apostasy coming "with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing."

We have not, therefore, such a general expression here as: "through the deceitfulness of sin, (Versions of 1611, 1881.) Yet, for present homiletical use, reasoning from the particular sin referred to here to the general is both obvious and justifiable. Whatever sin closely clings to one (xii. 1), and so is his besetting sin, acquires its influence by lying deceit, just as this sin that beset the Hebrews to whom our epistle is addressed. And the effect of that deceit is to harden the heart, as exemplified by those that fell in the wilderness.

The Author follows up the exhortation just given by considerations added in vers. 14, 15, the emphatic points of which are that, **we are become companions of Christ**, and are so become **when it is called To-day.** Connected by: **For** with what precedes, the reference is to the double aspect of the warning of vers. 12, 13. **We are become companions of Christ**, etc., refers to that of ver. 12, and affirms what it is that the perfidy (*ἀπειθεία*), against which they are there warned, would repudiate. **When it is called To-day**, etc., refers to the counsel and warning of ver. 13, and justifies both its: **exhort one another so long as it is called To-day**, and its warning against **hardening.**

Such seems to be the true logical connection of vers. 14, 15, which has perplexed commentators from the earliest writings of the sort that have been presented to us. The history of this matter is comprehensively given and the views lucidly classified in Lüneman and Alford. A perusal of that history will dis-

¹ Lüneman, comp. Meyer on Eph. iv. 22.

courage any one from attempting to classify *his* understanding of the passage under any of the competing views. It is but just to state, however, that the view now given differs from all represented in those accounts, in taking as the emphatic statement of the context the first clause of ver. 14, instead of the second.

The Author, continuing to use the inspired scripture he has quoted for reproof and correction, (especially in the **To-day** of ver. 15) uses it also for teaching and instruction, and continues so to use it in the same way in chapter iv. 1-11.

Ver. 14. For we are become companions of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of the confidence steadfast unto the end; 15. while it is said: To-day, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation.

The logical connection has been represented above. Because of the prominence and consequent emphasis of *μἑτοχοι* = **companions** (for such is here the meaning of the word ¹), and because the first clause of ver. 14 introduces a fresh thought, whereas the second clause has been substantially, and partly in identical words, expressed before (vers. 6), and because it *is* the first clause, we are called upon to take it as the prominent and emphatic thought introduced by: **For**. And so taking it, it justifies the construction by the good sense it yields. By saying: **we are become companions of Christ**, the Author institutes a parallel between his readers (including himself) and the situation referred to in his Psalm text. This is natural also from the point of view in vers. 1-6, that brings forward the comparison of Moses and Christ. "Those that journeyed out of Egypt were the companions of Moses; but we are the companions of the promised Saviour, and therefore partakers of every promise finally fulfilled in him."² Nothing could be more to the point than to follow up the exhortation: "Takè heed lest there shall be perfidy in any one of you" (ver. 12), by the statement: **For we are companions of Christ**. And such is the logical connection of our ver. 14. It confronts the apprehended perfidy with Him against whom it would be displayed. It has been shown above, that ἐν τῷ ἀποσταγγῆναι does not define the perfidy, but the event that will reveal its existence.

¹ Del., von Hof., De Wette, comp. i. 9.

² von Hof., similarly Del.

The evident purpose of the Author to point a parallel between the Christian situation and the situation of the Israelites in the wilderness, demands our special notice, and that we bear it in mind. For the effect extends beyond the present context. It is resumed again when he recurs again to the same subject of apostasy, vi. 1-6. This intention of pointing such a parallel occasions two peculiarities of our context, vers. 7-19: (a) the liberties the Author takes with the Old Testament scripture he uses, as noted above under vers. 7-11; and (b) the choice of expressions used here to describe the conduct against which he warns his readers. In the former (a) we may observe the effort to adjust the expression of the substance of the scripture record in a way to point the parallel; and in the latter (b) a choice of terms that are suited both to the ancient and to the Christian situation. Thus the two situations are identified as being essentially the same; and the solemn and tremendous truth and fact of the former are shown to be identified with the latter. This is skillful composition in the highest degree, producing the intended effect in a fashion at once terse and most irresistible.

But the Author says: **We are become** (*γεγοναμεν*, which has here its proper meaning) **companions of Christ**, with a qualification. It is the same, with some modification, as that expressed ver. 6. *Here*, he says: **If** (*ἐάνπερ*) **we hold fast the beginning of the confidence steadfast unto the end.** "The beginning of the confidence is said, because the church of Christ is, in thought, contrasted with the church of Moses, that had left Egypt with the assured confidence that Moses was ordained to bring them to Canaan. In this assured confidence they stood at first, but did not hold it steadfast unto the end."¹ "A **beginning** is meant that shall abide, so as not to be merely a beginning without continuance."

From the present context we are able to define further² what **the end** is that is mentioned, vers. 6, 14. It is not: "the final redemption of individuals and of the whole Church;"³ at least in the concrete notion of it present to mind of the Author and

¹ von Hof.² See above on ver. 6.³ As Del.

pressed on his readers ; nor the death of individual believers ;¹ “ but the coming of the Lord, which is constantly called by this name,” as Alford² says. But this is true in a different sense from that intended by Alford. It is the coming of the Lord described, 2 Thess. i. 7 sqq. ; ii. 3 sqq., as attending the apostasy, which, as we have seen, our Author also holds out in prospect. That apostasy and the consequent rejection of the Jews will **end** the **to-day** for those in their peculiar situation, whom the Author addresses. Those that hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast to that end, will not afterwards encounter the danger that evokes the present warning. As far, then, as that trial can test the matter (and they could be subjected to no greater test ; moreover, taken as a community it would be decisive), their holding fast will establish the reality of their being the house of God and companions of Christ. Perfidy and hardening will show that they never were such in fact.

The text says : **If we hold**, etc., the *ἐάνπερ* expressing, that the companionship mentioned is so far, *and only just so far*, the case as the holding fast, etc., is the case.³

Representing, that : “ We have become companions of Christ,” with the important qualification mentioned, the Author adds that this has taken place :

Ver. 15. While it is said: To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

This is also connected by the **For** (ver. 14,) with the foregoing, according to the representation of the logical connection given above. The *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι* is to be taken temporally.⁴ Chrysostom views the context as an inversion of statements, and, making a parenthesis of vers. 16–19, he connects our ver. 15 with *φοβηθήμεν οὐκ ἔτι ποτε κ. τ. λ.* iv. 1. He represents the logical connection of our *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι*, as follows : “ For we, too, have had a gospel preached unto us, even as also they, when it is said, To-day if ye will hear His voice.” While taking a different view of the context, we may appeal to this construction in support of it. It is as good sense to say : “ We have become

¹ As Stuart.

² Similarly Lün.

³ So von Hof.

⁴ See above, on *ἐν τῷ ἀποστήναι*, ver. 12.

companions of Christ, when, or while it is said "To-day," etc., as to say: "We have been preached to (evangelized), when it is said To-day."

What is thus represented is, that becoming Christians, **while it is said: To-day . . . provocation**, justifies all the points of the counsel of ver 13, viz., to exhort one another, to do it daily, to do it until the end, and to do it expressly to prevent hardening.

As in the provocation, in the Author's Psalm text, presents the example that prompts the present exhortation (as it did the Psalmists), with its counsel and warning. As an example, illustrating the present danger, it is very comprehensive. The warning not to harden their hearts, *as* in the provocation, is an intimation on the part of the speaker, that the present situation threatens to be like that. The prominent characteristics of that provocation are obviously many. The Apostle proceeds in the following vers. 16-19, to point to a few of them. We must admire the skill with which he chooses. He points the application with laconic and nervous vigor, that must have fallen on the hearts of his readers with bewildering impetuosity, that nothing could ward off, and that must have been most effective with every one that was not already hardened. In doing this, he resorts to the interrogative form of self-evidential appeal, which is only the more convincing. The representations of these verses ought to have the same force with the Christian reader now. For there is ever some form of antichrist present in the world (2 John, 7 sqq.), as formidable as that against which the present epistle contended. And under the influence of that antichrist, those that are partakers of a heavenly calling are in danger of hardening their hearts, as the Israelites in the provocation.

The first point that the Apostle makes prominent in the warning example of **the provocation**, is *the universality* of it.

Ver. 16. **For who, when they heard did provoke? Nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses?**

The universality affirmed in this second clause, had the exceptions of Caleb and Joshua, as every one knows. Because the universal statement, without mention of exceptions, *seemed* to con-

flict with the fact, this second clause was from the earliest times commonly read as not being interrogative like the first.¹ Accordingly, the Version 1611 reads as if this clause made the exception: "Howbeit not all that came," etc. But this is now generally agreed to be an error.

The second point that the Apostle makes is, referring to the greatness of God's anger, to call attention to *what provoked* displeasure so great.

Ver. 17. **And with whom was he displeased forty-years? Was it not with those that sinned? Whose members fell in the wilderness.**

There is no antithesis implied here with such as were not objects of divine displeasure. The point is to make prominent that it was *sinning* that provoked *such* displeasure that lasted forty years. The Author is evidently making a climax, in which the oath, with its consequences, represents more than the displeasure and its consequences. Accordingly, his reference in the present instance is to the event named Massah, recorded Exodus xvii. 1-7, from which, according also to Moses, Deut. vi. 16, the displeasure of God dated. The Author's text says: "**As in the provocation,**" (ver. 15), and here he points to the first step in that hardening, which he sufficiently identifies by calling it sinning.

The following clause: "**whose members fell in the wilderness,**" if included in the question, would serve further to identify those that were the objects of such displeasure. But this identification is plain enough without such addition, and moreover, has been given with precision in the foregoing verse as: "all those that came out of Egypt with Moses." It is more to the point to emphasize the displeasure that such sinning provoked. Moreover, seeing that in ver. 19 we have an impressive affirmation following the questions of ver. 18, it is better² to put the interrogation at **sinned**, and take the following clause as a direct statement. Then, we must understand the Author as uttering an impressive reminder of the purport of that displeasure that lasted forty years, and how it actually took effect.

¹ See, in Alford, the history of the exegesis.

² With Bengel, Del., von Hof., Griesbach, Lachman, Tischend.

The *third point* that the Author makes is, to remind the readers that God (proceeding to more than displeasure that lasted forty years) swore that they should not enter into His rest, and to bid them *notice what led to that final and fatal result.* It was **disobedience.**

Ver. 18. **And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?**

The event referred to was that recorded Num. xiv. 22 sqq. The sinning was then more obstinate and aggravated than the former event from which God's displeasure dated. (Comp. Deut. i. 26 sqq.) It was actual rebellion, and the Author also means by **disobedience** to call it by a worse name. As such God treated it with greater severity than mere displeasure. He was wroth, and in His wrath He swore that they should not enter into His rest.

Such are the points that the Apostle makes prominent in that provocation in the wilderness, that his Psalm text holds up as a warning example. On men's part the example shows the universality of the transgression, and how they proceeded to extremities of sin. On God's part it shows how He, too, proceeded to extremities.

The Apostle has made the foregoing representations, vers. 16–18, in support of his exhortation, ver. 12, the chief point of which is: “Take heed (*βλέπετε* = **see**) lest there shall be in any one of you perfidy.” He concludes them with the statement:

Ver. 19. **And we see (*βλέπομεν*—*δι’ ἀπιστίαν*) that they were not able to enter in because of perfidy.**

As Ebrard expresses it, “we have in these words a kind of *quod erat demonstrandum.*”¹ The identity of some of the words with those of the exhortation, ver. 12, shows that the Author is pursuing the same thought. What is demonstrated is the justice of that warning against perfidy, founded on the Psalm text, quoted before ver. 12. The Author's comments on that text in vers. 16–18, show that those concerned were excluded from God's rest. **And we see that they could not,** etc., is not an affirmation in confirmation of the foregoing statement of ver. 18, as if it said: and in fact they did not enter in, as we see.² The

¹ Similarly, de Wette, Lün.

² Against von Hof.

emphasis is on ἀπιστία = **perfidy**. This different word is not meant as the synonym of "sinning" (ver. 17), nor of **disobedience** (ver. 18), nor as the comprehensive expression of both. It points to an interior quality that is the source of both, fully expressed in ver. 12 as: "an evil heart of **perfidy**." To this the Author, by an emphatic affirmation, ascribes all the conduct and consequence of that provocation in the wilderness. It is a trait of our Author to go back to the ultimate sources of facts he represents.¹ He does so here. Our verse 19 (as the καὶ = **and** shows), is no inference from the foregoing, but the Author's statement of the fundamental truth that explains the facts recited. He refers all to their ἀπιστία and says: **they could not enter in**. He says: **We see**, associating his readers with himself as he does, ver. 6: "whose house we are," and ver. 14: "We are become companions of Christ . . . if we hold fast," and still continues to do all through chap. iv.

The application of the Apostle's Psalm text used as a warning, in other words, the full force of the similarity of the present and the ancient situation intimated by: "as in the provocation," appears when it is seen that now, as then, there is a promise of entering into God's rest. Without such likeness, indeed, there would be no parallel, and consequently little point in the warning example. What in Christian readers could be perfidy, apostasy, or turning back, and hardening like that of the Israelites, unless they were under the same promise of a rest? or at least a similar promise? And what application of that extremity of God's wrath, viz., exclusion from His rest, if now He offers no rest? The warning example would of course apply exactly if they had still *the same promise* extended to them. Then, beside having the same living God to deal with, they are also related to him by the same conditions, only made plainer by His past judgments, and especially by the fact that they "are become companions of Christ." (iii. 14.)

It is, then, as pressing the point of his warning and counsel, iii. 12-19, that the Apostle proceeds, in chap. iv. 1-10, to show that those who are become the companions of Christ have still

¹ Comp. ii. 10.

the promise of rest, as well as those that came out of Egypt with Moses. Such appears to be the progress of thought in the present context. And thus the Author connects what follows by the simple illative particle (*οὕτω*).

IV. 1. **Let us fear, then, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should suppose himself to have come too late.**

At iii. 12, 15, the Apostle addresses his readers only in the second person plural, and the predicates: "take ye heed lest in any one of you," and: "exhort ye lest any one of you," express action that must be exclusively their concern. In our verse, however, he combines the first and second persons in a noticeable way. He says: **Let us fear**, because it is his fear, and he would make it the fear of his readers. The thing feared, however, is their danger and not his. Therefore he says: **lest any one of you**. "Let us fear" means also: take care; and the Apostle makes it his care to guard against the danger, not only by warning his readers of it, but also by providing the correction for it. By saying: **a promise being left of entering into his rest**, he both affirms a fact, and presents it as a matter of solicitude in the way expressed by: "lest—any of you should suppose himself to have come too late" for it. His readers can only share his fear for some of their number, when they see the fact to be as expressed, viz., a promise is left of entering God's rest. That any could suppose they were too late, was, in other words, to suppose no such promise was left and still operative. The only way to obviate this fear is to show that the promise is left. By saying: **let us fear**, the Apostle intimates his purpose of obviating the apprehended danger by such a demonstration. Thus our ver. 1 proposes the subject of the following discourse to ver. 11.

What has just been noticed may account for, and at the same time help to interpret, certain ambiguities in the present verse beside the combination of the first and second persons already remarked on.¹

¹ Thus, whether *καταλειπ. . . . αὐτοῦ* depends on *ἵσπερ ἠκέναι*; or whether *καταλειπ. ἐπαγγελ.* is gen. absolute; whether the latter means: *a promise neglected*, or: *a promise being left*. These points are not to be settled, as in Lün., Alford

By saying: "a promise being left of entering into his rest," the Author both affirms a fact and presents it as a matter of solicitude in the way expressed. He says: "let us fear." It is his fear, and he would make it the fear of his readers. But it can only become such by his representing to them the important truth in question.

It is important that Christians now-a-days should recognize how unique is the subject that the Apostle here represents to his readers. His exposition of his Psalm text makes it appear how the truth in question is found in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, this representation of the goal of salvation as being God's rest into which believers are to enter stands quite alone. After the Apostles passed away, the Christian form of this Old Testament truth must have been quite unfamiliar in Christian circles, except as this epistle gradually won its way to general canonical recognition. This was long after there had ceased to be churches made up of converted Hebrews, and circumstanced as the original readers of this epistle were. This fact makes it possible that much of our epistle, and especially this, its most unique teaching, would be read with Gentile eyes, that is, with habits of thought that would miss the points as they would be apprehended by primitive Jewish converts. It is the Gentile interpretation that has been handed down to us as traditional. The fact now alluded to should remind us also how it is possible that, with our best efforts to put ourselves in the place of the original readers, we still may fail to see and read as intelligently as they. Such considerations have their importance in estimating the merits of conflicting interpretation. One of the most important of these demands attention at the very threshold of our chap. iv.

It has been traditional to render *μήποτε . . . δοκῇ τις ἔξ ὑμῶν ὅστερ' ἔχεται*: "lest any one of you should seem to have come short of it," or similarly; the common notion being, that *ὅστερ' ἔχεται* expresses "failure to reach the goal." The rendering given above: "**lest any one of you should suppose himself to have been**" (comp. Raphelius, *Annot. Philol. ex Polyb. et Arrian*) by remarking on the absence of the article (comp. von Hof. *in loc*).

too late" (for it), is recommended by G. Raphel († 1740) in his "Annot. Philol. ex Polyb. et Arrian, 1715." It is that of Schoettgen († 1751) in his Hor. Heb. 1733, and of J. Sieg. Baumgarten († 1757), "Erklaerung d. Briefes a. d., Hebr. 1763." It has been adopted later by Bretschneider and Wahl, in their Lexicons,¹ and latest by Ebrard and von Hofmann, in their commentaries on our epistle.²

According as the one or the other rendering is adopted, so the view of the whole passage, vers. 1-10, will be affected. According to the traditional rendering, the aim of the Author will appear to be, to present considerations fitted to prevent his readers from falling short of the promised rest. According to the rendering now proposed, his aim will appear to be, to show his readers that they are not too late to enjoy the benefit of the promised rest;—and, also, not too late to be excluded from that rest in requital of an evil heart of perfidy as were those of old. We shall confine our notice to the rendering now offered.³

As a question of translation, there can be no important objection made to it. Such is the use of ὑποτρέπω, and the perfect ὑποτρέψεσθαι here can have no other sense; and much the most common meaning of δοκέω in the New Testament, is: "to suppose."⁴ Alford shows all this, and has nothing to object to the rendering but logical reasons drawn from the context. And so also Delitzsch and Davidson. But precisely such reasons support it. Every reader sees that, as a matter of fact, the burden of vers. 2-10 is to show, that the promise of entering God's rest is still in force, and this constitutes the singular importance of this unique passage of scripture. On the other hand, the notion of falling short of obtaining that rest is not again presented, except in a reference to those who of old entered not in. Moreover, a warning against falling short of that rest, through ignorance of there being still a promise of it, is, as a warning, much inferior in pungency to that of iii. 12, 13, against perfidy

¹ *sub voce*, ὑποτρέπω.

² See Alford.

³ Comp. Del., Alford, who expressly combat it, and represent the traditional interpretation.

⁴ Comp. x. 29.

and hardness of heart, and is, in fact, included in the other, as the less is included in the greater.

In the foregoing prefatory remarks on our chapter, an adequate and contextually logical motive has been shown for warning the readers not to suppose they are too late to have the benefit of the promised rest. And, finally, the unique and unfamiliar doctrine concerning God's rest is itself evidence enough that the illusion referred to was common. So that it seems incomprehensible how Delitzsch can say, "it could only be entertained by a deranged man." And, seeing the importance and preciousness of the doctrine, the need of setting it forth was very great, as the dangers of ignorance must be very serious.

The Author says again :¹ "lest haply, any one of you," thus implying, that, *the illusion* referred to *is common*, and that it is only a question whether some of his readers should become the victims of it. Those that entertained the illusion that they were too late for the promise of entering into God's rest, were in general, such as did not *believe* the truth *implied* in Ps. xcv. 11, as the Apostle expounds it. This appears from τῇ πίστει ver. 2, and from what is affirmed of οἱ πιστεύσαντες ver. 3. We mean, of course, belief in the truth involved in this Psalm, that is, the truth of the good tidings mentioned in the following verse; not belief that the Psalm *taught* the truth now in question. The latter would not have been believed or conceived to the present day but for the exposition in the chapter before us.

The Apostle begins to prove the statement, that there is left a promise of entering into God's rest, by affirming :

Ver. 2 a. **For we, too, have had good tidings preached unto us, even as those also.**

This statement is not to be taken as the equivalent of: "there is left a promise of entering into his rest," expressed in other words, with the additional notion that the promise is extended to us.² By employing the comprehensive term ἐσμὲν εὐηγγελισμένοι, which he uses again ver. 6, the Author shows, that he appeals to the fact of the proclamation of God's grace in all its length and

¹ Comp. iii. 12, 13; and καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν 1 Cor. x. 7, 8, 9.

² Against Davidson.

breadth ; for which, both in the Old and the New Testament, the proper expression is to “preach good tidings.” Comp. Isa. lii. 7 in the LXX. ; ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοῇν εἰρήνης. The same thing is referred to in the next clause of our verse by the term ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς. This proclamation *we*¹ have “as well as those” others (ἐξεῖνοι), by whom are meant the Israelites in the desert. By affirming this at the present point, the Author comprehends all such hearers of all times under one class. This proclamation, in Moses’ time, was a call to enter God’s rest. He means to show that it is the same now ; as, indeed, it has always been and will be while good tidings are preached. It was so in Moses’ time, because God’s rest remained as something for persons to enter. It is so still, for the same reason. It is this the Author aims to show.

The fact that those of old were not able to enter in *might seem to end the proclamation (ἀκοῇ) so far as it was an offer of sharing God’s rest.* To show that such was not the fact, but only that, for cause, the proclamation was inoperative in their case, the Author adds the explanation of:

Ver. 2 b. But the word of proclamation did not profit those not combined by faith with them that heard.¹

Taking the text of our ver. 2 b as given in Westcott & Hort, we translate ἀκοῇ “proclamation.” It means, not “the hearing,”

¹ Emphatic ; against Davidson.

² By the rules of textual criticism, that are regarded as imperative in other cases, it is clear, that we must accept, as the correct text, here: ἐκείνους μὴ συνκεκαρισμένους τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν. Only the difficulty of making sense out of it is against it. That very fact, however, in the case of other disputed texts, is, by rule put in the balance in favor of the reading of which it is true. It ought to be allowed the same influence here. Comp. Lünemann on this point, who fairly represents the state of the question, yet decides in favor of the reading of the T. R. (συνκεκαρισμένος), solely on the ground that the other reading “conflicts with the context and is nonsense.” Westcott and Hort adopt the συνκεκαρισμένους. But in their “Notes on select readings,” p. 129, having represented the state of the text, they say: “After much hesitation, we have marked this very difficult passage, as probably containing a primitive corruption.” Alford, adopting the same reading, says: “The passage is almost a *locus desperatus*.” It is this reading that has been adopted by the Revision of 1881. Tischendorf Ed. viii. takes the other reading.

but *the thing heard*, “announcement.”¹ “The word of proclamation,” says the Author (by which he means that which was the preaching of good tidings to those of old), “did not profit those not combined with them that heard.” In this representation he designates those that were not profited, and at the same time by his descriptive designation: (“those not combined *by faith* with them that heard”), he points to the reason why they were not profited. *συγκεράννυμι* means, “to mix, commingle closely” (comp. 1 Cor. xii. 24). So describing those that the word did not profit, the Author ascribes the failure to the lack of faith in them; and intimates, on the other hand, that others heard with profit; that faith, had the former had it, would have combined them with the latter in this profiting. By this is equally implied, that faith was the profitable ingredient of the hearing of “them that heard.” We have thus a very pregnant sentence, after the manner of our Author, who not seldom has recourse to such breviloquence.

By this rendering, we understand the Author to distinguish two classes among those of old that had good tidings preached to them, viz., those that did not and those that did hear with profit. And we understand him to designate the latter by the simple expression: “them that heard.” Both of these notions have been deemed inadmissible. The former because, as it is supposed, iii. 16 shows that the Author allows of no such distinction;² the second, because in such close conjunction with *ἀκοῆς*, the following *ἀκούσασιν* cannot mean “to hearken or obey.”³ To begin with the second objection, we remark, that the meaning “to hearken, or to obey,” is not necessary here, and is not implied by the context; but only “hearing with profit.” In support of this meaning for *τοῖς ἀκούσασιν*, let it be noticed that the Author’s Psalm text, which underlies the whole context, and is constantly reiterated (iii. 7, 15; iv. 7), means by: “if ye will hear His voice” (*ἀκούσῃτε*), just this genuine, profitable hearing. This, then, ought to prescribe the sense in which we are to accept

¹ Comp. Lün., Alford, Del., von Hofmann, etc., and 1 Thess. ii. 13.

² So de Wette, Lün., Davidson.

³ So Lün., Del., von Hof., Lindsay.

ἀκούειν in the context ; so that where that meaning is not intended some qualifying words must show it. And (to notice the former of the above objections) such is the case at iii. 16. It must be admitted, when attention is called to it, that the question : “who, having heard, provoked?” suggests also the contrary question : *who, having heard, did not provoke?* And, following the Psalm text : “To-day, if ye will hear his voice,” the latter would be described simply as “them that heard” (*τοὺς ἀκούσαντες*). And further, the Author’s answer to his own question in iii. 16, given interrogatively : “Nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt with Moses?” allows us (even if we leave out of view Caleb and Joshua, as the Author does) to think of all the rest of Israel that did not come out of Egypt as excepted. And in the end these actually did hear the word of proclamation, so as to profit, as the others did not. Moreover, our Author shows that he does not ignore these profitable hearers, for at ver. 8 he expressly refers to them when mentioning Joshua’s performance.

This, then, is the purport of our verse 2. Good tidings from God are preached unto us as well as to them of old, In this respect the people of God of all time are alike. While some of old did not profit by the preaching, as others did, it was because they had not faith. Faith would have combined them with those that heard with profit. It is to be noted, that, in this representation, the Author expresses the antithesis only as, that some heard without profit and some with profit. He does not say that the one sort did not and the other sort did enter into the rest. In fact, none of those that were preached to entered in (vers. 6). And to the present none have entered into that rest (comp. xi. 13, 39, 40). Nevertheless, then and since, those that heard in faith held a very different relation to the promised rest from those that heard without faith. The preaching profits the former ; it does not profit the latter, The profit of the former is, that while they hear believingly they still have left a promise of entering into God’s rest. The profit of faith is even more than this, as appears by the statement of :

Ver. 3, a. **For we enter into the rest who believed.**

The connection denoted by : **For** is with the foregoing verse,

especially the latter clause of it. But it attaches to what we have noted is implied as the affirmative contrary of what is there denied. We may paraphrase the connection thus: "The word of proclamation profited them that heard it *believingly*. For we enter into the rest who believed." Thus our ver. 3 *a* explains what the profiting is, viz., entering the rest.

The Author says: "For *we* enter;" not: For *they* enter, which most readers expect to read. But he says "we," because in ver. 2 *a*, he has just comprehended all hearers of "the voice of God" (iii. 7), in one class without regard to times. His "we" means "the people of God" (ver. 9). "We enter," expressed in the present tense, sets forth the truth in the abstract as the consequence of believing; while "believed" (aorist) is said with reference to the preaching, which is represented as in the past (ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς). When the announcement was made, then, it was believed.

The Author's statement, ver 3 *a*, taken with ver. 2, affirms, that they who hear the gospel believingly enter into the rest. He proceeds, in support of this, to show that the promise of rest is still in force (ver. 3 *b*-10). This is his main proposition of ver. 1: "there is a promise left of entering into his rest." Though the proof of this first begins here, vers. 2, 3 *a*, cannot be treated as parenthetical. For the fact that the promise is still in force would be nothing without the fact that good tidings are still *proclaimed to us*. The Author's *whole* proposition is: there is left a promise of entering into his rest, and the offer of it is made to us.

Continuing, then, in close connection by using "even as" (καθώς), he says:

Ver. 3 *b*. **Even as he hath said: As I swear in my wrath: They shall not enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4. For he hath said somewhere of the seventh [day] on this wise: And God rested on the seventh day from all his works; 5. and in this [place] again: They shall not enter into my rest.**

The Apostle's argument in this comparison of the Old Testament passages is evident enough. It is intended to show, that

God's rest is something that continues. "It remains" (*ἀπολείπεται*), is his own way of stating the conclusion, ver. 6. Quoting again his Psalm text, he calls attention to how it signifies that in Moses' time an offer was made of entering God's rest. "My rest," is the significant expression, which the Apostle takes in its most literal sense as *that wherein God rests*. And in the entire context he uses "rest," both as substantive and verb, with this meaning, except only in ver. 10.¹ Thus he reads the Psalm differently from any other reader. The ordinary reader could only understand the possessive: "My rest," as meaning that rest which God had to give his people, in which *they might rest*. And by reference to Num. xiv. 23, 30; Deut. i. 35; xii. 9, the ordinary reader² infers that "my rest" refers to the promised land. But the Apostle evidently identifies "my rest" with the rest wherein "God rested the seventh day from all His works," Gen. ii. 2, and thus assumes this to be the meaning of the Holy Spirit (iii. 7) speaking in his Psalm text. He calls attention to the fact that God's works were done when He finished the creation, and He rested then. Quoting Gen. ii. 2, he shows that this is God's rest. Comparing with this his Psalm text, he shows that, according to the Psalm, the promise of rest was offered in Moses' time, and that it was a promise of participation in the rest wherewith God rested. This occurring so long after, shows that God's rest is a continuing thing, something that "remains." The inference presented is not, that it did remain till the time of Moses, but that, remaining till the time of Moses, it is *something that remains always*. Moreover, the language appealed to shows at the same time that God's rest, begun on the seventh day, remains as something *He offers to share* with them that believe.

Instead of formally drawing these evident conclusions from the passages he has collated to that effect, the Author proceeds to present them as premises for a further inference, viz., his main proposition, that there is now a promise of entering "that rest" (ver. 11).

¹ Comp. Davidson, *in loc.*, and especially the reflective note, p. 97 sqq.

² Comp. Hengstenberg, J. A. Alexander on Psalm xcvi. 11.

Ver. 6 a. **Since then it [the rest] remains for persons to enter into it,**

It is thus, the Author, by one expression, presents (a) the double inference from the foregoing, viz., that the rest remains, and that it is for persons to enter, and (b) premises (marked by "since" ἐπεὶ) for further inference. He says, "it remains," in the simplest meaning of ἀπολείπεται, "to be left as, or where it was;" as Paul says: "I left (ἀπέλιπον) my cloak at Troas, with Carpus" (2 Tim. iv. 13). He says, "it remains" in the same sense that he says, using the same word, that "there remains a keeping of Sabbath" (ver. 9), and that "there remains no more a sacrifice for sins" (x. 26). He says "it" (*the rest*) remains. For ἡ κατάπαυσις is the subject of the verb, not only because it reigns over the whole context as the chief notion discoursed on, but also because it is actually expressed in the foregoing clause of ver. 5. It needs no more to be expressed than the subject of ἀπέλιπον, 2 Tim. iv. 13. He says in a universal way: "for persons to enter in." For so τινάς is to be taken here, as in Rom. iii. 8, and often.¹ There is nothing in the context to justify the very common notion, that the Author means to say emphatically, that some *must* enter in,² or (to express it differently), "The table of the Lord shall not want guests; God will bring men to the rest."³

To this premise is joined a second, still connected with the "since" (ἐπεὶ) that introduces the first clause of our ver. 6.

Ver. 6 b. **And they to whom good tidings were before preached did not enter in because of disobedience,**

If it were the Apostle's purpose, in mentioning this with the foregoing, to represent that, since some *must* enter, and these *did not*, therefore, God set another day so as to have *some* enter, He would not add that "because of disobedience" they entered not (comp. iii. 19). This cause of their not entering is precisely the point of the present mention. It resumes the statement of ver. 2 b, and pairs it with the other result obtained, viz., that the rest remains for persons to enter. Since *disobedience*, and not that

¹ See Grimm's Lex., *sub voc.*

² So Alford.

³ So Lindsay; similarly Stuart, McLean, Davidson.

the rest became non-existent, was the reason of *their* exclusion who were first preached to, the promise of the rest may be extended to others. And having stated these premises, the Author immediately points to the fact that it was so extended, and is still, saying :

Ver. 7. **Again he sets a day, To-day, in David saying after so long a time, as was said above: To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

In: "He sets a day,"¹ neither *ὁρίζει* nor *τινά* implies such a notion of special limitation as is expressed by the rendering: "defineth a certain day."² *τινὰ ἡμέραν* = "a day" is in apposition with *σήμερον* = "To-day," and *προεῖρηται* refers to the Author's own mention of it at iii. 7,³ and is equivalent to: "as I said before."

The long interval from the seventh day of creation to the Exodus, and the offer at the latter period of entering God's rest, show that this rest, as a rest for persons to enter, remains. Now, by appeal again to his Psalm text, the Apostle shows that "in David" (which means in inspired words (iii. 7), commonly ascribed to David, as by the LXX. ; but means, in effect and particularly, in David's⁴ day, as the clause: "after so long a time" shows,) *the offer of entering that rest is made again*. For such is the point of our ver. 7; not that this long interval shows that the rest remains. This latter *has* been proved. The "To-day" of the Psalm is the day of grace since it was uttered. And, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," by the Apostle's exposition, sets this day as a time when one may enter the rest; and, as a voice of God calling to us, it is a promise to us of entering His rest. *And this proves the proposition* announced in ver. 1. "There is a promise," etc.

Having now followed the Author's reasoning from ver. 1, to this, its result, we note that nothing in it bears on the notion of failing to attain that rest; but everything here said shows, that there is left a promise, and how it becomes operative. This,

¹ So de Wette, Lün., *et. al.*, render. On *ὁρίζει* comp. Acts vii. 26.

² Revision of 1881.

³ So Calvin, de Wette.

⁴ Against Davidson, p. 87, who assigns the Psalm to the period of captivity.

then, bears out the rendering: "lest any one of you should suppose he is too late for it."

The most remarkable thing in the foregoing exposition by the Apostle (iv. 1-7) is his identifying "the rest" called in the Ps. xcv. 11 "my rest," with God's resting referred to Gen. ii. 2, and that he does so without any notice of the fact that no one else had so read the words. This latter fact, because he seems to read as if he supposed every one must so read, misleads his interpreters, and induces the effort to understand him in some way consistent with the common way of reading Ps. xcv. Yet penetrating minds easily discover the impossibility of doing so, and resort to other expedients. Calvin calls the Author's manner in this passage: "embellishing," (*exornare inceptit*), in contrast with his manner in iii. 7-19, which he calls treating the Psalm text literally, *i. e.*, "in its genuine sense." And he compares the present manner of the Author to what he calls Paul's way of working up (*ἐπεξεργασία*) a text. Yet, spite of what he says in justification of the performance he imputes to the Apostle, this view of the passage makes it little better than blowing bubbles with the water of life. Moreover, such a view could only encourage the "torturing" of the passage of which Calvin complains as so common. For what the Apostle is supposed to allow himself, others will try to imitate.

If the Author's manner of introducing scripture here were in the free way that we observe in chap. i. 4 sqq.; ii. 11-13, viz., without formal citation and without exposition, we might admit such a view as Calvin's. But it is impossible to suspect him of taking such liberties, as would appear in the present case, with scripture that he introduces with the solemn words: "As saith the Holy Spirit," (iii. 7). His concluding words, (iv. 7), in taking leave of his Psalm-text: "As was said above, To-day," etc., show that from iii. 7-iv. 7, he treats it in the same earnest spirit and with the same regard for its genuine sense that Calvin recognizes in iii. 7-19.

It is better to understand that the Apostle reads the Psalm correctly, and that by the words: "my rest" the Holy Spirit, meant the rest with or in which God rests, though all other

readers *had* failed to see it. Paul also read the phrases: "my righteousness," "thy righteousness," and the like in the Old Testament, where the possessive pronoun refers to God, in a way different from all that read before him, of whom we have knowledge. Before his reading, such expressions were universally supposed to mean a righteousness that was God's exclusively, as in Ps. xcv. 11: "My rest" was supposed to mean a rest that was man's exclusively, so far as the enjoyment of the rest was concerned.

Let us suppose that in Rom. i. 16 sqq., Paul had written in this fashion: "Let us fear lest some of you may be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God, as saith the Holy Spirit: The Lord hath made known his salvation, his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen." Thus he read Ps. xcviii. as no one ever thought of understanding "his righteousness." It is as like as not, that, when writing Rom. i. 16, 17, Paul had in mind Ps. xcviii. 3, as any other Old Testament scripture.¹ Old Testament scripture obviously underlies what he says; and it is such as speaks of God's righteousness. He says the gospel reveals (ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται) that righteousness. As we follow, while he gives the gospel, we see that such is indeed the fact. It is nothing less than a new revelation of the righteousness of God, when we see that it is something imputed to us, though he shows that it was there in the Old Testament. It was there unrevealed.

In the hands of our inspired Author, "My rest" of Ps. xcv. 11, also unfolds with a glory previously unsuspected. *This, too, is a revelation*, as well as the other, and we have it through the same gospel. It is another reason for not being ashamed of that gospel. It is something like being so ashamed, when one demurs to the meaning the Apostle attaches to "my rest," because no one ever before so read. We may expect revelation from him.

Paul secures prevalence for his interpretation of "God's righteousness," by the fullness and point of his discourse about it. Yet we may remember, that we owe our understanding of it to

¹See *Analytical Comm. on Rom.*, Rev. John Forbes, LL.D., p. 113.

one man, on whose authority we accept it as an inspired interpretation of the Old Testament truth. We may reflect, too, that it would have been just as true had Paul announced it but once, and as briefly, as the truth regarding "God's rest" is announced in the passage before us. Let us accord the same authority to the present inspired interpretation. Had the New Testament been as largely written for Christian Jews as for Christian Gentiles, we might have had more about God's promised rest. What we have is, anyway, as clear and unmistakable as any single passage taken by itself, that treats of the righteousness of God, or of the state of redeemed souls after the present life.

That the Author does not comment on the false, or rather imperfect reading of his Psalm text that was universal, need occasion no surprise. Where, in the many passages wherein he discourses of the righteousness of God, does Paul take such notice of the corresponding ignorance of that? Finally, it ill-becomes anyone to assume against the Author, that the universal way of reading must be correct, or that it is a very important consideration in such a matter of interpretation, when we see how generations have read texts in a fashion that has only been corrected lately, and is now universally conceded to have been false (*comp. e. g. ii. 16.*)

Let us, then, take the Apostle's interpretation of "my rest" as correct on his authority. Grammatically and logically it has nothing against it. Once the difficulty of adopting it is surmounted, all the rest of his reasoning from it is as plain as any other New Testament comment on Old Testament scripture. He himself shows by appeal to Gen. ii. 2, (which we know is often referred to in the scriptures, and notably in the Fourth Commandment,) that there is a rest of God's own. Moreover, when attention is called to it, we notice that the Psalmist's phrase "my rest" is peculiar and even unique, as applied to the events in the wilderness. It has no equivalent in the original records, as *e. g.* Num. xiv. 23, 30; Deut. i. 35; xii. 9. As the expression is actually original with the Psalmist, so it might mean to express what was never before expressed, viz., just what the Apostle takes it to mean. And this sense might be adopted in the other

instances of using the same form of expression, and be found greatly to enrich the meaning of those passages (comp. Ps. cxxxii. 8, 14; Isa. xi. 10; lxvi. 1).

And what we have as the result is a glorious doctrine. Jewish piety without our passage,¹ and Christian piety with the aid of it, have entertained the notion of *a* heavenly rest after this world that is to be an eternal Sabbath. But here it is revealed that we are to enter God's own rest wherein He rested when the creation was done. We are to rest with Him, rest as He rests, and with His rest. This is "the heavenly calling" (iii. 1). When God gave the promise to Abraham, and renewed it to those led forth from Egypt, it was to this rest he was calling them. In connection with giving them Canaan he would have realized this promise. There is no reason for not accepting this inference, if we pause there. It presents no greater difficulty, it presents, in fact, the identical notion that is suggested by our Lord's words of lament over Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace," Luke xix, 42; "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not," Luke xiii. 34. What would have been, had the Jews accepted their Messiah? How differently in time and circumstances would have been realized the promise of entering into his rest! Beyond that we cannot go. This is what is intended when good tidings are preached now unto us (ver. 2). It will continue to be so as long as we have the voice of God saying: "To-day." A most important consideration involved in this doctrine is, that it reveals the unity of "the people of God" (ver. 9) of all ages. They have one "heavenly calling" (ver. 1) and are under the same divine discipline. And—which is the special application of the doctrine in the present context—it shows that unbelief and disobedience will be attended with the same sort of punishment as fell on those "whose members fell in the wilderness," iii. 17. For having established the truth that "there is left a promise of entering into his rest," the Apostle at ver. 11 exhorts: "Let us give diligence to enter into that rest,"

¹ See in Del. and Alford the presentation of this.

and then adds the warning: "that no one fall in the same example of disobedience."

It is not quite true that the Author takes no notice of the erroneous ways of reading his Psalm text. He has already reflected one of them in ver. 2 *b*. For, supposing that "my rest" meant more than the land of promise, the inference might be, that "the oath: they shall not enter my rest," ended that rest by withdrawing the promise of it. This mistaken notion has been corrected. But on the other hand, supposing "my rest" to mean only the promised land, it would be thought that those whom Joshua led into Canaan, did enter the rest. Therefore, as a promise fulfilled, there can now be no promise of entering into that rest. It is to this notion that vers. 8-10 are directed, and they are only supplementary to the previous reasoning. *They add nothing to that finished argument*, but only fortify it against the misapprehension that "the rest" was wholly a thing of the past.

Ver. 8. For if Joshua gave them rest, he would not speak after that of another day.

By this statement the Author represents (hypothetically, *εἰ*) a situation when it *would* be too late for a promise of entering the rest.¹

But his appeal to his Psalm text, wherein God (for God is the subject of "would speak") *does* speak of another day, carries with it the proof that what Joshua did was no giving rest in the sense of "entering my rest." The supposed case did not exist. When our verse 8 says: "if Joshua gave them rest (*κατέπαυσεν*) it means by: "to give rest" just what the Author understands the Psalm to mean by: "my rest," and that Joshua did not give *that rest* (ver. 11).

When it says: "God speaks of another day," we are not to understand this as if it in any way expressed the notion of speaking of "another rest." This impression is a common one. Some² suppose the Author in vers. 1-10 discourses *expressly* of three rests, viz., of the seventh day, of Canaan, and of eternal rest; and they treat the "speaking of another day" as expressing

¹ So von Hof.

² e. g. McLean, Lindsay.

the notion of *another rest*. Thus they interpret: "If Joshua, in giving them rest, had given them *all* that rest which God intended, God would not," etc. The only meaning of "another day," is another opportunity of embracing the promise (one and the same) of entering the rest (one and the same) offered before.

The statement of ver. 8 involves the denial, that what Joshua did was a giving of rest in the sense of "my rest" in the Psalm. But there is still another sense in which the "entering my rest" might be supposed to be fulfilled by God, and *thus* that it would be too late for a promise of entering his rest. God had given the Sabbath day to rest as He rested. This notion, if it existed in his readers,¹ is counteracted by the statement of vers. 9, 10.

Ver. 9. **Then there remains keeping the Sabbath day to the people of God.**

This statement, introduced by *ἄρα*, connects as an inference with the foregoing verse, and particularly with the negative notion presented there, viz., that entering Canaan was not entering: "My rest." It is a sudden and impromptu inference, such as *ἄρα* is used to introduce,² that comes up much as a coincidence

¹ Whether this conception may be imputed to the Author's contemporaries may be doubted. But that it can be entertained by Christian scholars, while studying the passages before us, is illustrated by McLean, Lindsay, etc. This fact makes it at least probable that the Author felt called on to deal with it in his readers.

² The rendering of ver. 9, given above, is a departure from what is traditional, and it is proper that, besides letting it speak for itself, we notice the reasons for rejecting the common interpretation.

(1.) It seems to have been overlooked that *ἄρα* is never used to introduce the conclusion of an extended argument. As a conjunction, it keeps near its adverbial force, which "expresses the intimate connection and coincidence of two notions," Jelf, Gramm. § 787, 1; comp. Kühner, § 509, 1. "It expresses an inference made from a foregoing thought as something well-established. In itself *ἄρα* has no syllogistic meaning; this lies rather in the context, as a whole." Kühner, § 545, 1. Excellent normal examples of its use are Matt. xvii. 26, "*Then* are the children free;" Luke xi. 20, "*Then* (Version 1611, no doubt) is the kingdom of God come upon you." It may most always be best rendered by, "then." It refers, in every other instance in the New Testament, to something expressed immediately before (comp. Rom. vii. 25; viii. 1). It may be doubted whether in any Greek it can be found introducing the conclusion of an extended argument. Yet the common interpretation of our

of notion, though stated syllogistically. One notion involves the other. The fact that entering Canaan was not entering God's rest, explains the continued existence of the institution of the Sabbath day. And the continuance of Sabbath keeping is evidence that the true rest has not been attained. *σαββατισμός* means, "observance of the Sabbath." The Author says this observance "remains" (*ἀπολείπεται*) in the same simple sense of the word *verse* makes it introduce a very triumphant conclusion of reasoning that extends through eight verses preceding.

(2.) Supposing the common interpretation correct, that makes *σαββατ.* another expression for God's rest, the conclusion so announced would be rhetorically and logically weak. All through an extended argument, the subject has been uniformly referred to by one name, *κατάπαυσις*, and in the conclusion it is referred to by another totally different, and that a word that occurs nowhere else previous to this writing and only once in contemporary writers (viz., *Plut. Morals, de superstitione, c. 3*), and a word that has a meaning of its own quite different. Who would so announce a grand conclusion? Not the Author of this polished epistle. It may be supposed that the singularity of the word suggests the extraordinary sense. And interpreters render ver. 9: "There remains, therefore, a Sabbatism," and fancy that it sounds well and suggestive. Yet they overlook the fact that *they* need to explain this singular English expression. And our Author would need to do the same if his word were as singular. But it is not conclusive that *σαββατισμός*, because it is not found in LXX., Philo. or Josephus, was an unusual word to his readers. It is as regularly formed as *ἐορτασμός*, *βαπτισμός*. Its use by Plutarch proves that it was a current word with only an ordinary meaning. It is quite gratuitous to suppose our Author coins it. (Against Bleek). In Christian writers it is of common enough occurrence, and used in its simple meaning only, except in comments on our text, and then its (supposed) extraordinary sense is only made plain by amplifications. Justin uses it interchangeably with *σάββατα φυλάσσειν* and *σαββατίζειν* (*Dial. c. Tryph., c. 23*).

(3.) Were the common interpretation correct, it would not announce a proper conclusion to the Author's reasoning. This concludes that there remains a rest. His proposition was (ver. 1), "there is left a promise of entering the rest." There might be a rest, and yet no promise of it to the people of God now. Accordingly, we have seen the Author establish that the rest remains, as a promise to establishing further, that there is a promise of it offered now.

(4.) As a conclusion (and even as a reiterated conclusion, which no one supposes it to be), our ver. 9 would be flat, because the conclusion has been presented already at verse 6, "there remains the rest for persons to enter into it." Moreover, that conclusion is the glorious one that *God's rest remains*, while this would only be a conclusion that *a rest remains*.

(5.) Most decisive of all, *σαββατισμός* means, "to observe the Sabbath." This, of course, is undisputed. The only question is, does the Author mean

noted at ver. 6 (comp. x. 26), meaning that it was left and so remained as it was before, an ordinance for "the people of God."

The import of this is, that had Joshua given them God's rest, observing Sabbath day would have ceased. There would have been no more keeping Sabbath day. The force of this reasoning, and the obviousness of it that justifies the terse way in which it is conveyed by an enthymeme, appears by comparison of x. 26.

to use it in an exalted sense? There is nothing to intimate that he does. The word must have some history to stand itself for such a meaning. But the fact is, it has no history previous to its present use; being found in antecedent Greek literature only in the one other place mentioned above. Or it must have such a meaning lent to it in the context by qualification, or previous use. Of this there is nothing. Only the assumption, that in this verse the Author sums up the result of his reasoning, has induced the notion that he means by *σαββατ.* the same as God's rest, and thus that he calls that rest a keeping of Sabbath. It is better to do as we have done; seek a meaning for the context consistent with the primary and common sense of the word.

(6.) We may ascribe the traditional interpretation to something more than a mistake. Here may be found one of the most important effects of our owing that traditional view to Gentile interpretation. It is obvious that the rendering we have given ver. 9 involves the most important consequences concerning the observance of the Sabbath. It makes our verse the most pointed New Testament proof text for the perpetual obligation of the Fourth Commandment. We have only to represent to our minds the apprehension with which these consequences must be regarded by those that now deny that obligation, and we will represent to ourselves the feelings with which Gentile Christians of the II. Century would approach the statement of verse 9. As in the modern, so in the ancient mind, the assumption would be that the *prima facie* meaning of the words *could* not be that which was intended. Comp. de Pressense, *Trois Premières Siecles*, II., chap. vi. § 1. The *οὐ σαββαρίζουσιν* of Justin (*Dial. com. Tryphone*, c. x.). may be taken as representing the fixed attitude of their mind that determined their interpretation of the scriptures; as: *Hoc est corpus meum*, chalked on the table in the castle of Marburg, determined Luther's. Consequently, they would look for another sense, to which the allegorizing and imaginative exegesis of that period would easily accommodate itself, with a haughty disregard of any correction that might be offered from Jewish Christian quarters. The traditional interpretation, we may suppose, was the consequence. (Comp. Tertul. *adv. Judeos*, c. 2; Epiphani. *adver. haeres*, *Lib. Tom.*, II. c. 32.)

Those that maintain the obligation of the Fourth Commandment according to the "Westminster Confession of Faith," will observe, that the rendering now given of vers. 9, 10, brings into the problem no element that was not there before, except a proof text, that more directly than any other in the New Testament, affirms the doctrine there taught.

There the Author, having set forth Christ's offering for sin once for all, says: "There remains (*ἀπολείπεται*) no more a sacrifice for sin." When the reality is come, there is no more use for the shadow. Here, on the contrary, he represents, that because the real rest has never been attained, the shadow *does remain*. Thus the Author appeals to the great and significant and still-existing institution of the Sabbath day. As a shadow it was evidence that the substance had not yet come. Yet as a shadow, with deep significance from its connection with God's resting the seventh day, it looks forward to and is a representation of the promise of entering God's rest. The Author points to this significance in

Ver. 10. For he that entered its rest, he also rested from his works as God from his own.

"For" connects this statement with the foregoing as its explanation. In *τὴν κατάνυσιν αὐτοῦ*, the *αὐτοῦ* refers to *σαββατισμός* of ver. 9. The aorists *ὁ εἰσελθὼν, κατέπαυσε*, "he that entered, rested," are perfectly natural when speaking of actions relating to an institution of ancient date, though continued in the present. It is said here from the view point of entering Canaan under Joshua, and still keeping the Sabbath. It is much against the rendering that takes *τ. κατάνυ. αὐτοῦ* to mean, "God's rest," that it is driven to various desperate shifts to explain these aorists. As rendered above, ver. 10 is a simple statement of the nature and meaning of keeping the Sabbath. The nature of it is, rest from our works. The meaning of this is imitation (*ὡσπερ*) of God's resting. And in this connection, it is appealed to as an institution that remains as long as it is true that the people of God have not entered into His rest.

In vers. 1-8 the Apostle has showed that there is left a promise of entering God's rest, and that while the gospel is preached no one is too late for it. In vers. 9, 10, he has adverted to two supposed situations wherein it *would* be too late for such a promise, and showed that they do not exist. He has now prepared the way for an exhortation which follows.

Ver. 11. Let us, therefore, give diligence to enter into that rest, in order that no one may fall in the same example of disobedience.

Thus the Apostle applies the truth just established, and from this appears, that his motive in representing the doctrine has been chiefly to press the application of the warning example of those in the wilderness.

This explains his omission to amplify the glorious truth just presented, and set forth its inviting aspects. He presents it in order to identify the present situation with the ancient one. Then "there was a promise of entering his rest." "To-day" there is the same. Those of old were debarred by God's oath from entering in on account of their disobedience. (iii. 18.) Now, having established the likeness of the two situations, the Apostle warns his readers against the same fate. Thus, our present verse connects closely in logical relation with iii. 18, 19. What has been represented iv. 1-10 serves to establish that logical relation.

This corroborates the interpretation we have given at iv. 1. The notion that the Apostle is there warning against falling short of the promised rest would ill-agree with the unmistakable warning of our present verse. This, as we shall see, points to the fate of divine exclusion from the rest and on the ground of disobedience. The Author would not, in the same passage, ascribe the failure to enter the rest, first, to simply falling short of it, and, then, to a divine exclusion effected by a divine judgment, and realized by a falling like that in the wilderness.

The Author says ἐξείνην τὴν καταπαυσιν, **that rest**, viz., of vers. 5, 6 *a*. The ἐξείνην points to a remoter antecedent than "the rest," mentioned in ver. 10,¹ to which latter, if the Author meant it, he would refer by ταύτην.² Thus, he distinguishes, as we have interpreted, between "the rest of keeping the Sabbath" (ver. 10), and "that rest that remains for persons to enter." (ver. 6.) The latter, he exhorts his readers to show diligence in entering. This **diligence** is put in antithesis to **disobedience**, and thus it is plain that it must appear in that faith which has

¹ Comp. Bleek.

² See Buttm. Gram., p. 104, and his article on ἐκεῖνος in the *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1860. Comp. Luke xviii. 14; John v. 35, 37, 38.

already been set in the same contrast (comp. vers. 2 and 3). The haste¹ that is implied in diligence, must be in hastening to believe and obey "the heavenly calling" (iii. 1). Let *us* give diligence, he says, and we may interpret the first person as at ver. 1.

As has been just before noticed, the Apostle does not incite to this diligence by motives of reward presented by "the rest," but by motives of fear of the consequences of disobedience. This is evidence that he treats the situation as very perilous in that direction. Those consequences are imminent. The first concern, therefore, is to escape them, and he says: **In order that no one may fall.** The verb *πίπτειν* in the present close logical relation with iii. 16-19, has its own obvious meaning, viz., *ruin, destruction.*² It expresses, not that which has ruin for result, but the ruinous result itself. The nature of the destruction is defined by the expression: **In the same example of disobedience.** The *ἀντὶ τοῦ ὑποδείγματος*, obviously refers to the representation of iii. 17, 18. What the Apostle means is, to affirm that such falling would be just like that of old: **an example of disobedience**, which he is warranted in saying after having, in vers. 1-10, represented the identity of the situations. Calling it "an example" signifies that one may see in it how disobedience is punished.³

It is with this notion of falling or ruin as now the imminent peril, and with the notion of that fall being made an example of how disobedience is punished, that the representations of the following vers. 12, 13, connect, being conjoined by **For**.

Ver. 12. **For the word of God is living and energetic and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing to division of both joints and marrow of soul and spirit, and a judge of thoughts and intents of the heart.**

By the word of God is meant no impersonation, nor anything kindred to the distinctive representations of John i. 1-14; 1 John i. 1, 2.⁴

The attributes here described belong to God, to whom, as the subject, the discourse makes transition in the following verse.

¹ Vulgate incorrectly translates: *festinamus*; yet preserves the true notion by the (also incorrect) rendering: *incredulitatis exemplum*.

² So Chrys., Calvin, Bleek, de Wette.

³ So von Hof.

⁴ Alford.

By a natural mode of speech these attributes are here ascribed to the word of God, because God is represented by that word, and He attends that word, giving it living and active potency. What is said here is general, in the sense that it may be said of any portion of the word of God that "is preached of Jesus Christ unto obedience of faith."¹ But here it is said in particular of that word that the Apostle has said is and was preached (ver. 2), and which he calls: "the word of proclamation" (*ibid*). It is the word of his Psalm (xcv.) text to which he has particular reference, and which he has introduced by: "as saith the Holy Spirit" (iii. 7). It is to that word, as it represents what was proclaimed to those in the wilderness and is proclaimed still, and in hearing which we hear the voice of God, that he calls further attention. He has made it the text for a warning against hardness of heart and perfidy. He has used it to show that God's voice still offers an entrance into his rest. He uses it once more, reminding his readers of the tremendous validity of that word, by saying of it what is true of God's word wherever it demands obedience,² but peculiarly true of this word of Ps. xcv., because of the example seen in the fate of those who disobeyed in the wilderness.

What he proceeds to say of the word of God is supposed by many to represent its penetrating and discriminating power, and thus, that nothing can escape the knowledge of God. Accordingly, the words soul and spirit and the division of them, and of the joint and marrow, and the thoughts and intents of the heart. are all weighed as if the Author wrote as a philosopher. And thus, also, this passage is appealed to in psychological debates, *e. g.*, by the advocates of a trichotomy.

But it is repugnant to a just sentiment that such philosophical notions should be introduced into a context like the present. Moreover, it does not appear what forceful logical relation such a representation could have with what precedes. In verse 11 *b*, whether we interpret it as above, or understand³ it to mean falling into and remaining in what would be an example of dis-

¹ Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

² Comp. Rom. ii. 8, 9.

³ With von Hof. and many others.

obedience, the situation it denotes is already one of *manifest* disobedience, and would not put to proof the discriminating power of the word that the Author is supposed to appeal to here. With that interpretation, vers. 12, 13 appear as an isolated eulogy of the word of God ; and, in effect, such is commonly the treatment of it.

It is more natural to understand vers. 12, 13 as describing *the executive power* of the word of God.¹ This is a logical notion to connect by **For** with what precedes, as has been noticed above. Then the language before us, describing the living, irresistible, and unerring aim and power of that word of Ps. xcv., that defines the present crisis, shows how judgment is imminent, and why diligence should be used to enter the promised rest.

Moreover, it is more natural to suppose that the Author's description runs in a scriptural mold, than in that learned in philosophic schools. We are reminded of: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"² The type of the Author's rhetoric is contained in that and similar passages. But still more we are reminded of language in Moses' farewell address, that is so significant of the history of the people of God down to the remotest future: "For I lift up my hand to heaven, and I say, I live forever" (ζῶ ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). "If I whet my glittering sword (τὴν μάχαιράν μου), and mine hand take hold in judgment; I will render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me." Deut. xxxii. 40, 41. In Biblical rhetoric the sword expresses retributive judgment. We must retain that meaning in the present passage; and the more so as it fits the context. The presentation of notions in couples: "soul and spirit," "joints and marrow," "thoughts and intents," shows that the expressions are not determined by any philosophy relating to such things. They are due to rhetoric, and the Author, by such double expressions, means to cover the notion of the whole spiritual being of man,³ with all its motives and affections. The anthropological underlying notions involved in the use of the terms are popular, and consequently unscientific. They do not, therefore, justify the nice analysis to which some interpreters subject them.

¹ So Chrys., Bleek.

² Jer. xxiii. 29.

³ Comp. Davidson.

The representations of our ver. 12 bear on the affirmation that the falling that is imminent would be an "example of disobedience" identical with that of old. It points to the **thoughts and intents of the heart** as that over which God by His word sits as judge (*κριτικός* = "judge," as one is a judge, or critic of the quality of, *e. g.*, poets). In this is involved the notion of award. In the present situation, it is in the domain of the **heart** with its **thoughts and intents**, that "disobedience" appears, and not in overt acts as in the wilderness. But God's word is judge in that province. As such, His punitive sword falls irresistibly and unerringly where there is disobedience. **The joints and marrow** must be taken in a spiritual sense, as the joints and marrow of the soul and spirit.¹ And taking it so, we may, with von Hofmann, render *ψυχῆς κ. πνεύματος ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν*, "**both joints and marrow of the soul and spirit.**"² Not *separation* of body and soul, or of soul and spirit is meant, for *μερισμός* does not signify separation, but **division** that sunders the whole into parts, and, so to speak, dismembers soul and spirit. The Author, in pointing to the ancient counterpart of this example of disobedience, mentions how: "their carcasses" (*κῶλα*, properly "limbs" or "members") "fell in the wilderness" (iii. 17).

Ver. 13. **And there is not a creature unseen before him, but all things are naked and exposed at the throat to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**

The Author by *αὐτοῦ* (*bis*), which refers to God, expressly intimates that it is not the word, but God, to whom he ascribes the personal attributes in what he represents concerning the word of God.

If our verse 13 were part of a representation of the omnis-

¹ So Alford, von Hof., Lün.

² von Hof. supports this by appeal to *βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς* vi. 1; *τὴν πιστὴν τοῦ κυρίου . . . τῆς δόξης* = "the faith of the glory of our Lord," Jas. ii. 1, comp. Huther (Meyer's Comm.) previous to edit., 1870. He also urges that the inverted order of the words, putting the dependent *ψυχ. κ. πνευμ.* first, is due to emphasis that rests on them; and cites *ὁ τρόπος τῶν παλαιῶν τῆς φιλοσοφίας*, Plato Protag. 343 B., where *τῶν παλαιῶν* owes its position to the tone resting on it, (comp. Stallbaum *in loc.*). Davidson has the same rendering. Angus incorrectly: "Dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow."

cient and searching power of God's word, *i. e.*, of God, it does not appear how it helps out the idea of verse 12, or marks any progress in the thought. For that every creature is manifest before Him and all stripped and bared to His eyes, is inferior in expression to the description, ver. 12, that the most hidden frame and structure of soul and spirit are penetrated by Him. But if vers. 12, 13, describe the punitive energy of God's word, and so amplify the notion of an example of the punishment of disobedience, we have a natural progress of thought. For, verse 12 having represented the irresistible and unerring efficacy of that word as a sword, our verse 13 represents every creature as manifest to the judge of the heart and everything ready for the blow of execution, as when the condemned criminal stands stripped, and with bared neck, ready for the blow of the sword to fall. In other words, verse 12 represents how annihilating the blow will be when it falls, while verse 13 represents that things are ready for the blow to fall. The figure represented by *τραχηλίζειν* may not admit of precise definition.¹ But all of the proposed explanations (whether derived from the athlete's taking his adversary by the throat to choke him; or from the action of slaughtering a beast; or from the Roman usage of exposing the face of one about to suffer punishment), agree in this, that the word represents a situation ready for complete overthrow or the fatal blow. It does not seem possible for such a word to do service in any way as descriptive of how everything is open and manifest to God as a judge. And no wonder that commentators find it difficult of explanation with that view of our verse. Alford translates it, "prostrate," and owns to dissatisfaction with that. Delitzsch, waving all archæological illustrations as of no account, says: "*τραχηλίζειν*, which undoubtedly means, to sieze by the throat and throw back the head, receives here its secondary meaning from the context, and yet also without entire loss of the image, as *e.g.*, by taking *τετραχηλισμένα* as simply equivalent to *πεφανερωμένα* (Hesych., Phavor., Peshito), *aperta* (all the Latins), 'uncovered' (Luther). The meaning seems to be, that whatever shamefaced creature bows its head, and would fain

¹ See in Alford the exegetical history.

withdraw and cloak itself from the eyes of God, has indeed the throat, as it were, bent back before the eyes, and so remains with no possibility of escape, exposed and naked to their view." In this Delitzsch tacitly adopts the explanation drawn from the Roman custom of exposing criminals, which just before he has rejected as having "no support from Greek literature." As he remands us to the context for the sense in which the word is to be taken, we find that the context leads up to the very image indicated in the Roman custom. Its finding no support in any citation of *τραχηλίζειν* in Greek literature is not fatal to this explanation. It was a usage known to those that spoke Greek, and of which they must speak, and this would be the word with which to name it. We may be sure that *σαῖβατισμός* was a word of common use long before our Author wrote; yet we have seen that it first appears in this epistle, and then in Plutarch. We may then adopt that Roman custom as explaining the figurative use of the word in our text.¹ But the figure is exact, and means of the things (*πάντα*) referred to, that they are in that situation that *γυμνά* & *τραχηλισμένα* describe when applied to condemned persons, viz., they are ready for execution.

The Author employs universal terms (*χρίσις*, *πάντα*), as in ver. 12 he refers to human spiritual nature in the abstract, because under the universal the particular is inevitably comprehended. He employs the neuter (*πάντα*) because, as the previous discourse shows, it is abstract notions that he has in mind and not persons. Under **all things** we must comprehend particularly "an evil heart of perfidy, hardening the heart, hearing the word without faith, tempting God, disobedience." The word of God as a sword of vengeance falls on such things with unerring and irresistible power, that misses nothing. Wherever they are, they are now exposed for execution.

The view of vers. 11–13, now presented, is in harmony with the warning already given ii. 1–4. There the motives for heeding the revelation spoken by the Son, are drawn from the peril of a situation of condemnation for past transgressions of the word

¹ The following are cited as adopting it: Elsner, Wolf, Baumgarten, Kuinoel, Bretschneider, Bleek, de Wette.

spoken by angels, and the need of escape from impending punishment. In view of that situation, the mission of Jesus is called a salvation. Following that (ii. 17, 18), the grace and efficacy of Christ is represented in that, as a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, He makes expiation for the sins of the people. Here the exhortation is to those that are assumed to have accepted Christ as the Apostle of their profession, and the leader of their heavenly calling. Accordingly, the motives for diligence in seeking to enter into the rest to which He leads, are drawn from the peril that attends apostasy. This also is represented as a situation of impending wrath. And following this again, the Apostle renewedly directs attention to Jesus as a High Priest, with express mention of His being able to sympathize with infirmities; and we may suppose that while this is stated universally, there is also a particular reference to such infirmities of faith, tending to disobedience, as have been the subject of warning, iii. 7—iv. 13. With such reference the Apostle adopts an inviting and encouraging tone, and exhorts to come to “the throne of grace, to receive mercy and find grace for timely help” (ver. 16). The significance of the expression **timely help**, is to be found in the present time of writing, which, as the Apostle has showed, is described by the Psalmist: “To-day, if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts.” Those that experience the hardship and temptation of such a time, and have even showed its sins of unbelief, and are exposed to the executive energy of the word that has just been represented, may come by Christ to the throne of grace and find mercy.

The Apostle now begins to treat the second part of what he has called the contents of the Christian confession,¹ viz., Christ our **High Priest**. The discourse on this topic extends to x. 18.

Ver. 14. **Having then a great High Priest that has passed through heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.**

It is not the Author's point to affirm the things that are here predicated of Jesus. In the present verse, and in the foregoing context² where the same things are mentioned of Christ, they are

¹ iii. 1.

² i. 1-3; iii. 1.

not presented as matters that need proof, or even affirmation. By designating them at iii. 1 and here as the contents of the Christian confession, the Author treats them as the common belief of himself and his readers. Such being the case, the conjunctive **then** cannot be referred¹ to ii. 17; iii. 1, or to the whole context, i. 1–iii. 6, as resumptive of what has been there affirmed, viz., “the elevation and grandeur of the person of Jesus in general.” As between the Author and his readers, these things have not been subjects of affirmation; though to us, who would learn what the Apostle believed, they are to be treated as affirmations of doctrine. Nothing having been affirmed on these subjects as premise, the “then” cannot introduce a logical inference about them, nor logically resume their affirmation.² The sentiments of vers. 11–13, as ascertained above, furnish an appropriate premise for the exhortation: **let us hold fast the confession**, and on the other hand the logical reference of *οὕτως* = **then**, must, as usual, be to something immediately foregoing, unless sense forbids it. The executive energy of the word of God, particularly that word: “To-day, if ye will hear his voice,” etc., and the imminent fate impending over those whose characteristic was “transgression and disobedience,” ii. 2, made such mediation as that of a high priest the very refuge the people of God needed. That situation has just been appealed to in support of the exhortation: “Let us give diligence to enter into that rest,” ver. 11. It is here used further, by the logical force of **then**, to press the need of trusting to the only means of entering into that rest, viz., the mediation of a high priest, *i. e.*, to Jesus.³ **The confession**, is here, as at iii. 1, that of which Jesus is the contents, and expressly in respect to what is mentioned, viz., that He is a great High Priest, that has traversed heaven, and is the Son of God. This confession is to be **held fast**, which means holding to the certainty of the truth concerned, and holding to it with a view to getting the blessing involved in it.⁴

The Apostle calls Jesus a **great High Priest**; and mentioning in addition that He is the **Son of God**, and exalted to heaven,

¹ As by Lün.² So von Hof.³ Comp. x. 19.⁴ See ver. 16; comp. vi. 18.

justifies his calling Him **great**. This greatness is presented as the reason for that trust in Him expressed by holding fast the confession.

But greatness is not the only quality in a high priest that sinners look for. The greatness peculiar to the Son of God might discourage transgressors, just because such a person might have no experience of the temptations that lead to transgression, and consequently no sympathy with the weakness of such. It is specially the Author's aim to represent Christ's qualification to be High Priest in this particular, and not on the ground of His greatness. This particular about our High Priest he *has* affirmed before (ii. 17) and would now establish. Therefore, he proceeds :

Ver. 15. For we have not an High Priest unable to sympathize with our infirmities, but one that has been in every respect tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Having affirmed this, and added an appropriate invitation, ver. 16, the Author proceeds to amplify, v. 1 sqq., the truth so affirmed.

That Christ was tempted has been affirmed already, and also that He was made like His brethren in every respect, and that this qualified Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in things pertaining to God* (ii. 17, 18). Here it is affirmed that His likeness to His brethren extends to His being tempted *in every respect* like them, and that with reference to inspiring *them* to trust in Him, as one qualified to sympathize with them. The added expression : **without sin**, limits the notion of likeness. Sin formed no part of it. Not merely that He sinned not, though tempted, is meant; but that the temptation was wholly unattended by sin in Him. "Not only did the temptation produce no sin in Him, but it attached to no sin in Him."¹

Ver. 16. Let us, then, approach with boldness to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace for timely help.

This invitation is founded on the representation of verse 15, to which the *οὕτως* = "then" refers. The invitation is to transgressors; the readers with the Apostle having been represented

¹ von Hof.

in this light (ii. 1-3 *a*). The approach is to God, whose word they have transgressed. His presence, or where He is, is expressed by **the throne of grace**, as viii. 1, in connection with another sentiment, it is called "the throne of majesty." When He that occupies it receives transgressors, it is a throne of grace. What transgressors may obtain there, and what they approach to **obtain is mercy**. At ii. 2, 3 *a*, the Apostle has signified that what transgressors must seek is escape from the consequences of transgression, and that what Christ brings is salvation. The present invitation is to approach and obtain the mercy that will be escape, and **find the grace** that will be salvation. **Mercy and grace** are thus, not to be understood as expressing the same thing,¹ but distinct notions. Having obtained mercy they will find, in addition, grace. Or (to use the language of Jer. xxxi. 31 sqq., that the Author quotes further on, viii. 8 sqq., in representing the same truth), when their transgressions are blotted out, they will find themselves the gracious subjects of a new covenant. The Author says: **to find grace for timely help**. In this expression the reference is not to every time of temptation, and the timeliness of the help is not that at all such times we shall be helped before temptation masters us.² At iii. 13, the Author has presented the thought of a time and need that are pressing, and he has continued to urge the duty of heeding them as the time of grace. At iv. 1 sqq., he shows that his readers are not too late for it, while he shows, too, that unbelief and disobedience may make them too late. The **timely help**, then, is help "while it is called to-day," while there is yet time, and when it is not too late.³ In accordance, then, with all that he has been urging, and will further urge, he now invites his readers to come and find the grace that will be timely help. When the Author says come **with boldness**, he does not mean the boldness that is sure of one's self, but the boldness that one feels when sure that he comes for something that is there to be had and that he may obtain. Thus it appears that by **approaching the throne of grace** is not meant the habitual approach to God that the Christian

¹ Against Lün.² As von Hof., Del., Riehm, etc.³ So Bleek, de Wette, Lün.

must make in prayer,¹ but that approach described in Jer. xxxi., that is explained in chap. viii., whereby the people of God are received into new covenant relations and forsake the old that passes away. The full expression of this **approach** is found at xii. 22-24. It is the meaning intended when the same word (*προσερχεσθαι*) is used, vii. 25; x. 22. At xii. 22, the Author, using the same word, says: "ye have come," which expresses the fact involved in believing on Christ. This fact or truth might not be apprehended by one that believed on Christ. It was not by those whom the Apostle addresses. Such, then, though confessing Christ, may be exhorted to approach the throne of grace with boldness to obtain mercy and find grace. Then the invitation is, to apprehend the true and full import of Christ and His revelation, and of their having believed on Him, and to seize the blessing He brings.

V. 1-4. **For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2. being able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring, since he himself is compassed with infirmity; 3. and on account of it he must, as for the people, so also for himself offer for sins. 4. And no one takes this honor to himself, but when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.**

Many have supposed that here the Author takes up a new thought quite distinct from the foregoing context. This occasioned the present division into a distinct chapter, and influenced the rendering of the English version of 1611, which is corrected in the version of 1881. According to this supposition, the Author proposes to *contrast* the high-priestly character of Christ with that of human high priests. Hence the rendering: "Every high priest taken from among men." This leads to taking our vers. 1-4 as preliminary statements marking the points to be contrasted.

But the **For** of ver. 1 establishes a logical relation between the present statements and the preceding context. It is debated whether the **For** connects with iv. 16, or iv. 15, that is, whether what is now said is meant to give a reason for the exhortation to

¹ Against Lindsay.

approach unto God, or to give proof that we have in Jesus a sympathizing High Priest? But the debate seems needless. The reference may comprehend both. The exhortation to approach is founded on the representation that Jesus is a sympathizing High Priest, and this latter fact, with its conjoined consequence, expressed in the exhortation, makes but one subject, in illustration of which the Author now offers additional matter.

His purpose is to justify what he has affirmed of our High Priest, and the encouragement to approach the throne of grace, and this he does by pointing to what is true of "every high priest." It is not contrast, but comparison and likeness, that the Author points to. The **every** ($\pi\alpha\varsigma$) is emphatic. The thing in question is true of every high priest, consequently it is true of Christ, and *ipso facto* it is affirmed of Him when He is called High Priest. As to the specific high priest concerned, it is obvious that, between the Author and his readers, no other could be thought of than the Levitical priesthood and the Aaronic high-priesthood. Were the matters now to be affirmed of high priests applicable to every high-priesthood, *i. e.*, to priesthood whether Jewish or not, the circumstances of the present writing would demand a distinct expression of this notion.

First among the characteristics of every high priest important to the present comparison is, that he is **taken from among men**. For the participial clause $\epsilon\tilde{\zeta} \alpha\nu\theta\rho. \lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\nu.$ is predicative, and not appositional with $\pi\alpha\varsigma \alpha\rho\chi\iota\epsilon\rho.$ ¹ The expression of this in participial form, while the following predicates are affirmed directly, may be ascribed to the fact that the Author has already represented the notion of Christ's likeness to those for whom He ministers as High Priest,² and that thus, like every high priest, He was taken from among men. Thus, he does not purpose to trace this likeness in the present text. But resuming the expressed notion by a participial clause, he proceeds to mention other characteristics that show how a high priest, as such, must sympathize with human infirmity while discharging his ministry. **He is appointed for men in things pertaining to God. Appointed for men** is the emphatic part of what is here affirmed. The high

¹ See Alford, Del., Davidson.

² Comp. ii. 11-18; iv. 15.

priest, though taken from among men and set apart to deal with matters pertaining to God, is not, by that, removed from men and their concerns. His appointment is **for men**; his business with God must be about them. If he forgets them, he misses the aim and business of his office. When before God in the functions of his office, he is there for men, for whose sake he was appointed. His chief business, as so appointed, is **that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins**. By προσφέρη = offer, is meant, not the slaying and offering on the altar, but the presentation after this is done.¹ What determines the meaning is not only the use of the word, but that, throughout the epistle, the correspondence between typical and anti-typical high priest relates to the tabernacle, and hence the mention of gifts with sacrifices. The τε καὶ = **both, and**, forbids our regarding **gifts and sacrifices** as one notion only emphasized by a double expression. The plurals are here used with reference to the repeated annual occasions when, as on the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi), the high priest offered, according to our Author, a gift and a sacrifice. That the great day of atonement is referred to is obvious from ver. 3. There is nothing to intimate that the Author refers to anything but what the high priest did himself in the discharge of his own peculiar functions on the great day of atonement. But Lev. xvi. 3-15 mentions only a bullock and a ram that the high priest sacrifices for himself, and a goat as the only sacrifice for the people, while it mentions nothing that it calls a **gift**. Nor is there mention made of a gift, *i. e.*, an unbloody offering, in any part of the ceremonies of the day. The difficulty thus presented has received various explanations; *e. g.*, that δῶρα is the general term for all sorts of unbloody sacrifices, and θυσία the particular bloody sacrifice;² or that both words are meant to refer to bloody offerings, a meaning that δῶρα often has when used alone. Neither of these explanations is admissible in the present case, because the two words are expressly distinguished. As it is obvious that the Author refers to what was plain as a matter of record in Lev. xvi., we see by reference to the record that nothing beside the sacrifice of the bullock and the goat, with sprinkling the

¹ See below in vii. 27.

² So, *e. g.*, Del.

blood and the offering of incense, attended the high priest's offering for himself and his intercession for the sins of the people (Lev. xvi. 11-15). For the burning of incense must have attended the bringing of the blood of the goat within the vail, as well as the previous bringing there of the blood of the bullock; the cloud of incense would need to cover the mercy seat in the one case as much as in the other. The annual offering of incense, then, the Author calls **gifts**,¹ and by **sacrifices** he means the annual offerings of bullocks and goats. The high priest's chief business was to offer the appointed gifts and sacrifices **for sins**. Thus, not only was he there on duty for men, whom he could not forget while he did not forget his duty, but he was there in reference to their sins and nothing else.

To this the author adds: **being able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring**, ver. 2. Brought in, as this idea is, by a participial clause, it describes the frame of mind with which the high priest must make his offering, and combines this along with the sacrificial service as comprehended in his appointment (*καθίσταται*); being taken from among men he is appointed that he may offer, being able to bear with sinners. By **the ignorant and erring** is not intended an exceptive designation, as though the high priest's offering and his bearing gently related only to sinners that were to be described in these mild terms, while sinners with a high hand were excluded.² With our Author, **erring** (*πλανῶσθαι*)³ is not an expression for mild sinning; and when he combines **ignorance** (*ἄγνοεῖν*)⁴ with it, we cannot suppose he means by it sin in a mild form. Our expression covers all sin that the people commit, and with which they come for atonement, and for which the high priest offers atonement. It names these, or rather the sinners, in the most general terms, as the high priest must think of them comprehensively while atoning for them. So must the one sacrificing bear gently with those

¹ So von Hof.: in support of which he appeals to Num. xvi. 15, 17, where, referring to the incense about to be presented by Korah and his company, Moses says: "Respect not thou their (הֶנֶּחָה) offering."

² Against Bleek, Del., Davidson, Moulton.

³ Comp. iii. 10.

⁴ Comp. Rom. x. 3.

sinning ; not as indifferent whether they have sinned or not, but as not incensed at them because they have sinned. The high priest's compassion for sinners is owing to his being taken from among men, which means he is a sinner like themselves. This idea the Author goes on to express : **since he also is compassed with infirmity.** The weakness is such as renders him unable to keep from sinning. The present expression is for the purpose of introducing that which follows : **and on account of it, viz., the weakness, he must, as for the people, so also for himself, offer for sins.** The **must** refers, not to an inward impulse, or a necessity in the nature of things,¹ but to the requirement of the divine institution by which the high priest was appointed.² The **appointed**, ver. 1, and the statement of ver. 4, show that the Author attaches importance to the notion that the high priest is by divine appointment all this that is affirmed of him. It could be little matter that he was so qualified, if these things were not what God required in a high priest. The matter just expressed preceded the offering for the people. The high priest first offered for himself and his house before offering for the people. This not only fitted him ceremonially to be a mediator for the people as holy and proper to appear for them before a holy God, but it fitted him with respect to the people themselves. Fresh from the confession of his own sin, and holy only by virtue of ceremonial absolution, he would sympathize with the sins of those whose high priest he was.

The Author adds another characteristic of "every high priest." **And no one takes the honour unto himself, but [he takes it] being called by God, even as Aaron, (ver. 4).** It is not a new subject that is here introduced, but only a second trait of high priestly qualification. And what is thus affirmed is also connected with the "for," ver. 1, and by that related to iv. 15, 16. It presents an essential ground of confidence in coming to God by the mediation of a high priest. Not only the office and kind of man are divinely appointed, but the person himself is called of God. Only one can be high priest. Only God can name him. There will, then, be certainty about him, and consequently confidence

¹ Against Del., Alford.

² So von Hof.

in approaching God by him. The example of this is Aaron.¹ The manner of Aaron's calling and institution as high priest settled, at the original institution of the office, that only those could fill it whom God designated. By confining it, then, to Aaron's posterity,² those that in that order took the office, did it as clearly by the call of God as Aaron. By appealing to Aaron as the example of the calling and appointing of a high priest, the Author appeals to the office as originally instituted, and therefore in its pure and simple form. This shows, that when he speaks of "every High Priest" (ver. 1), he means only those that were properly such according to the original meaning of the institution. Such a reference precludes of itself any consideration of suggestions arising from later history of the high-priesthood, and especially as it was in the Author's day, when high priests were appointed by temporal powers in a fashion that had little to do with a call of God. The Author, at a later point, in a similar manner, appeals to the Tabernacle, and its services as originally instituted, and not at all to the Temple, either as it then was or ever had been. We may assume that this is intentional, and the nearest reason for it is that his appeal is actually to the scripture, the authoritative records, and so he refers to the facts as represented there.³

In the next following verses (5-8), the Author returns from the general to the particular, *i. e.*, from what is true of every High Priest to pointing the correspondence in Christ himself. This he does in an inverted order.⁴ First, in vers. 5, 6 he points out the resemblance to what is mentioned in ver. 4. Second, in vers. 7, 8 he points out the correspondence in Christ in respect to

¹ Comp. Ex. xxviii.; Lev. viii.

² Exod. xxix. 29, 30.

³ It may be taken as one of many proofs of the omniscient superintendence of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the scriptures, that these appeals to the original Pentateuchal representations of things, now affords a most effective bulwark against the modern attacks of criticism on the genuineness of the Pentateuch. It has not heretofore seemed plain why the Author should refer to the Tabernacle and not to the Temple, and many even suppose he means the Temple. Now, however, much is plain why the composition of our epistle at this point is as it is.

⁴ So Hammond, Del.; on the contrary Lün., and Davidson, who treat it with contempt.

the statements of vers. 1-3. This is not done, however, in a precise and formal way, but rather the second resemblance is expressed indirectly in a relative sentence, vers. 7-10, which connects with the statement of vers. 5, 6, and represents how the Saviour became that which, not he himself, but, God glorified him to become.¹

Ver. 5, 6. **So Christ also glorified not himself to be made High Priest, but he that spake unto him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; 6 as also in another place he says: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.**

Precisely (καθ' ὅσπερ—οὕτως) as Aaron, in that respect stated ver. 5, Christ became High Priest. At iv. 14, the Author names him Jesus; here, in resuming the mention of him, he calls him **the Christ** (ὁ Χριστός.) We may suppose this is done intentionally, as befitting this mention in connection with Aaron.² When Aaron was made High Priest he was anointed with oil, and thence received the designation "the anointed priest," (in LXX. ὁ ἐλεῖος χριστός).³

Instead of saying simply: Christ took not this honor unto himself, it is said: **glorified not himself.** Thus what is called an honor (τιμή) in one case, is in this other called glory (δόξα). To the Author, every thing relating to Christ, what he is and what believers enjoy through him, is glorious,⁴ especially in comparison with others.⁵ Instead of saying simply: Christ was called of God to take the glory of becoming High Priest, the Author expresses the thought in an unique way much richer in meaning. The parallel in ver. 5 constrains us to understand that the chief thing affirmed is, that Christ was called *of God* to be High Priest. Hence we must take the expressions: **he that spake unto him,** etc., as a circumlocution for God (ὁ θεός).⁶ It is the Author's style to use such circumlocutions,⁷ and we have another for God in ver. 7. But such circumlocutions are pregnant expressions, a

¹ So von Hof.

² Comp. Moulton.

³ Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16.

⁴ Comp. i. 3; ii. 7, 9, 10; xiii. 21.

⁵ Comp. iii. 3, and also 2 Cor. iii. 8-11.

⁶ Comp. Ebrard, who cites Theophylact, Erasmus, Carpzov, Bengel, Bleek.

⁷ Comp. ii. 11, 14; x. 23, 30; xii. 3.

species of breviloquence, introducing notions important to the context. Thus the Author says : Christ was glorified to be High Priest by him that spake unto him: **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee**, using language of Ps. ii. 7. The time and manner of this **speaking** referred to must be that of the scripture passage itself, as is evident from the manner of introducing the next quotation from Ps. cx. **In another place**, signifies that both expressions are what is spoken of Christ in the scripture. It is common to suppose that the Author cites Ps. ii. 7 as *proof* that God called Christ to be High Priest. But this is attended with insuperable perplexities that are only obviated by suspicious ingenuity,¹ such as we have observed in reference to the scripture language used ii. 5-13. The language of Ps. ii. 7 prophetically called Christ God's Son. That of Ps. cx. 4, also prophetically called him Priest, that is, not High Priest, but Melchizedek Priest, a significant title that needs interpretation, and which the Apostle will proceed to interpret later on.

What the Author means to signify by pairing these two periphrases for God is, that God who called Christ so, stood in the relation of Father to Him. The quoted language is in neither case adduced as proof of the fact. His readers needed no such proof of these facts from the Author. Both facts, viz., that Christ is the Son and that he is High Priest, have been stated (not affirmed) before as the actual and common confession of the Author and his readers. But in that dramatic way the Author has used before,² he affirms in appropriate scripture language, that records the two things mentioned, that it was the *Father*, who called Christ his Son, and also called him Melchizedek Priest, that glorified him to be High Priest. His method is obviously more impressive than the simple didactic statement would be. Moreover, the notions thus introduced, do not end here, but are introduced with the ulterior purpose that appears in vers. 7-10, where vers. 7, 8, have relation to the expression, **Who spake unto him, Thou art my Son**, and ver. 9, 10, are related to the expression: **Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**.

¹ Comp. Lindsay.² Comp. at i. 5-13; ii. 12, 13.

The Apostle now adds a comprehensive representation concerning Christ, expressed in an extended relative sentence, closely connected with the foregoing by $\delta\varsigma$ = **who**. This sentence consists of two parts connected by **and**. At the head of the first, stands: **In the days of his flesh**; at the head of the second: **having been perfected**. These two expressions designate two conditions of Christ, and of them the Apostle remarks particulars concerning his High Priesthood. The first is as follows:

Ver. 7. **Who in the days of his flesh, having offered both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard from the [his] dread, 8. although he was a son, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.**

The **who** of ver 7, "refers not simply to 'Christ' ver. 5, but the relative sentence must be construed in its connection with 'did not glorify Himself to become High Priest,' in which connection it can only mean to amplify how the Saviour became that which, not Himself, but God glorified him to become."¹ **In the days of his flesh**, designates the period when Christ lived in the nature common to mankind. In that period occurred both what is principally affirmed, viz., **he learned obedience by the things he suffered**, and also what is stated in participial form as occurring precedent to that. "The preceding aorist participles express something that must be conceived as temporally antecedent to what the direct verb expresses. Moreover, the participial clause consists of two parts, the first stating that Christ prayed, and the second that His prayer was heard. The Apostle designates the praying as a $\pi\rho\sigma\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$ = **offering**, viz., of **prayers and supplication**. When it is considered that he has just been speaking, in vers. 1-3, of the two-fold offering ($\pi\rho\sigma\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$) of the high priest, it is natural enough to explain the present choice of expression for Christ's praying by that; and no expenditure of exclamation points² can avail against the fact, that this designation for prayer has its parallel in this New Testament writing, xiii. 15, in: 'let us offer up ($\alpha\nu\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$) a sacrifice of

¹ von Hof.

² This against von Hofmann's critics, e. g., Lün.

praise to God.’¹ Thus it must, after all, remain, that the Apostle has purposely conformed this: **offering up both prayers and supplications**, to that: **offering up both gifts and sacrifices**, (ver. 1); and so the notions there and here, conjoined in each case by *τε καί* = **both, and**, stand in both instances in similar relations, and the one pair corresponds to the other. By *δῶρον* = **a gift**, one honors God, and by *θυσία* = **a sacrifice**, one signifies that He needs forgiveness for sins that condemn him. As, then, to a gift one joins a sacrifice, so to **prayer**, by which one requests something of God, are added **supplications**, because the suppliant is in need and danger that can only be averted by God’s saving help. Both, not merely gifts, but also sacrifice, and not merely prayer, but also imploring supplication, are a deed of piety, the former of the sinner, the latter of the oppressed; and each is the consequence of infirmity, the former of a weakness that occasions falling into sin, the latter of a weakness that exposes one to evil. Thus correspond to one another the offering of the legal high priest, prescribed for him because he is subject to sinful infirmity, and Christ’s supplicating prayer offered up to God because of infirmity of the flesh that makes evil a temptation for Him. The one is related to the other as the legal high priest to Christ, the sinful representative of his people that are to be purified, to the sinless Redeemer of the sinful world. The supplication of the latter is, of course, no atonement; but dread of evil is infirmity, which only becomes well pleasing to God by turning to God in prayer.”²

Thus the Apostle has illustrated what he affirmed, iv. 15, viz., that our High Priest was tempted in every respect as we are “yet without sin,” by representing His likeness to every high priest, and painting the portrait *with sin left out*. The object of this affirmation and illustration is to show, that in Christ we have a merciful High Priest that can sympathize with our infirmities, (iv. 15). “As the legal High Priest was only then in condition to bring the offering to atone for the sins of the people, when he had first made the prescribed offering for himself, so Christ was only then in condition to endure the suffering in obedience, after the

¹ against Lün.² von Hof.

prayer, by which he brought his anguish to God, was so heard that he was freed from the infirmity that made him pray, but which also made him gentle toward us men who are beset with sinful infirmity. And this suffering in obedience had just as much for Him its ground outside of his filial relation to God, as the sins of the people that the legal high priest needed to expiate were for him the sins of others.”¹ Regarding the point set forth above, how Jesus was made gentle toward the infirmities of those whose sins he was to expiate, we may refer to the striking difference in His manner toward the disciples when he was in an agony of supplication, as recorded by all the Synoptists: “Why sleep ye? rise and pray that ye enter not into temptation,” (Luke xxii. 46,) and His manner afterward as recorded Matt. xxvi. 45; Mark xiv. 41, when He said gently: “Sleep on now and take your rest.”

The event to which the Apostle refers is the transaction in Gethsemane. It is this alone, neither including previous experiences “in the days of His flesh,” nor the suffering on the cross that followed.² The latter appears from all that we represent below about the meaning of “being perfected” (τελειωθῆς), ver. 9. The former is excluded by the simple fact, that we have no account of any experience like that described happening to Christ before Gethsemane. It was a solitary experience, and the Author’s exposition of it treats it as such an experience that could only happen in connection with His sacrifice that atoned for the people, as the legal high priest’s appointed sacrifice for himself could only be when he was to offer for the people. The Author’s description of the event includes one item, viz., **weeping**, not elsewhere given. Epiphanius,³ indeed, reports, that in some correct copies of Luke’s gospel, His weeping was mentioned. But we need not require such authority for the Author. He could have the information in ways of his own; and the fact is natural, and even necessary, in view of the agony as it is actually described by the Synoptists. Nevertheless, we may be grateful for the express mention, by competent authority, of this additional trait of the agony in the garden.

¹ von Hof.² Against Del.³ Ancor, 31.

What Jesus prayed for was, that He might be delivered from death. Such is the plain inference from the circumlocution for God to whom He prayed, viz., **him that was able to save him from death**. Such a designation for God is but a terse way of bringing in additional notions important to the context.¹ It expresses first, that Christ's prayer was, to be saved from death; and second, in connection with the event, that it was the will of God that He should taste death.² For though God could save Him, He would not.³ And, in connection with the context (vers. 5, 6, 8), the prominent thought is, that this is the Father that did not spare the Son. That Christ's prayer was to be saved from death is confirmed by the common understanding of what is meant by His prayer: "let this cup pass from me."⁴

It is debated here whether: **save from death** meant, not to suffer death, or not to be left in the state of the dead; in other words, whether Christ prayed not to die, or, to be raised from the dead. The direct and simple meaning of the expression: **save from death**,⁵ expresses only the former notion, and everything in the Author's representation accords with that.⁶ He would show how Christ was tempted in every respect like men. He has *affirmed* (ii. 15, 17) such to be the fact in connection with the crowning temptation of human life, viz., the fear of death. Now he *represents* Christ sympathizing with that infirmity by portraying how He shared with His brethren the same dread of death, as the consequence of sharing with them blood and flesh (ii. 14).

A further inquiry is suggested here: *what was that dread of death that Christ felt?* To see in that dread only human shrinking from the physical suffering that attends death, and especially a cruel form of dying, or even to conceive of that as an important part of the Saviour's dread, as the Apostle portrays it, and to compare it with the weariness and thirst that the Saviour felt

¹ Comp. on vers. 5, 6.

² Comp. at ii. 9, 10.

³ Comp. Mark xiv. 39 with Luke xxii. 42.

⁴ Matt. xxxi. 39; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42.

⁵ Comp. Alford, Baumgarten.

⁶ In favor of the other view, comp. Lün.

like other men,¹ is manifestly much below the plain of the Apostle's discourse. These notions had nothing to do with the representations at ii. 9. 14-18, where the same subject is dealt with as it affected the experience of common men. We must resume here what the Apostle represented there, and what we there learned of his meaning. There he spoke of men as tempted, and of Christ becoming in every respect like them; and, because it pertained to what he was there explaining, he specified the crowning temptation of humanity, viz., the fear of death. Here, having said (iv. 15) that Christ was tempted in every respect as we are, he portrays Him undergoing *that* temptation that was the life-long fear of those He came to save. His meaning is, that the Son was allowed to be overwhelmed by that dread just as other men. The same things that they dreaded were His dread, and His emotions then were like those of the pious sons of God before Him, *e. g.*, David and Hezekiah.² Having at ii. 14, 15, specified the fear of death as the special example of human temptation, the Author would need to express himself precisely to that effect, if he would not have his readers understand that he meant the same here. The seed of Abraham, on whom Christ laid hold to save them, had shuddered at death in the prospect of Hades, to which they were tending. Christ did the same, for the same prospect was before Him. "Through death" and Hades He was to deliver those on whom He laid hold as a Saviour. "Why shrank He back from death, except because He discovered therein the curse of God, and a conflict to be endured with all the powers of sin, and hell itself."³ We cannot define further what that dread was. Since Christ endured it and was perfected (ver. 9), it ceased to be the dread of the people of God. Death no longer presents to them that dread prospect. Those that experienced it before Him were perfected with Him,⁴ and for all after Him that obey Him, He became the cause of everlasting salvation.⁵ The way of the saints now is through Him, by the new and living way, to that which is

¹ As Lindsay.² See above on ii. 9, 14, 15.³ von Gerlach, quoted in Del.⁴ x. 14.⁵ Ver. 9.

within the vail,¹ to join the company of the spirits of the just that have been perfected. They have even come to them already in the new covenant.²

The second part of our (first) participial clause states that Christ **was heard from his dread**. This expresses not only that He was heard and answered, but also how He was answered. In this interpretation we adhere to the rendering of τῆς ἐνθυμίας given in the version of 1611, against the version of 1881, which reads: "having been heard for his godly fear" = His piety. In support of this latter rendering the reader may consult Delitzsch, Lünemann, Alford, Farrar.³ The logical connection, especially as involved in the comparison between the doing of the legal high priest and what Christ did, leads up to the rendering we prefer, and that has been the most generally accepted.⁴ This rendering, commends itself in that the addition, **from his fear**, describes a way of answering the prayer of Christ that presents no conflict with the facts of the case.⁵ With the other rendering, the simple statement that He was heard implies that what He asked was granted; and yet He was *not* spared. With our rendering, the Author explains that the answer was a deliverance from the awful dread that overwhelmed Him, and with this the

¹ x. 19.² xii. 22-24.

³ The rendering we reject takes ἀπό in the sense of "for," "on account of." The New Testament citations in favor of this use are Matt. xxviii. 4; Luke xix. 3; xxiv. 41; John xxi. 6; Acts xii. 14. But they do not support it. Those that seem most to do so, have that appearance only because the imagery of the idiom is overlooked. Zacchæus could not see Jesus ἀπὸ τ. ὄχλου, "from the crowd." But some of the Pharisees ἀπὸ τ. ὄχλου, "from the crowd," said to Him, etc., Luke xix. 3, 39. When the notion: "for the crowd," "on account of the crowd," is expressed, it is by διὰ τ. ὄχλου, Luke v. 19. Comp. the ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης Acts xxi. 11, with διὰ τ. δόξαν, 2 Cor. iii. 7. The latter expresses the notion: "on account of the glory." Acts xx. 9, as an example, is rather evidence of the poor support the alleged usage finds.

⁴ "This rendering is not in the least more difficult than when, Ps. cxviii. 5 עָנִי בְּמִרְהָב is rendered by ἐπήκουσέ με εἰς πλάτυσμον, which recalls Ps. xxii. 21, (22) בְּקִרְנֵי רַמִּים עָנִיתִנִי; or βαπτίζεσθαι ἀπὸ νεκροῦ (Sir. xxxi. 30); or παντίζεσθαι ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς (Heb. x. 22); or φθείρεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος." Von Hof.; comp. Whitby.

⁵ Comp. Baumgarten.

facts agree.¹ He was strengthened by an angel, and then went calmly to die. Having before experienced a dread of approaching calamity, like that of Noah (ἐν λαβῇ θείῃ xi. 7), in view of the flood, He afterward went to encounter death with serenity, like that of Enoch when he walked with God.

Ver. 8. **Though being a Son, he learned [his] obedience by the things he suffered.**

In vers. 5, 6, the Author has expressed that it was He that called Christ "My Son," and also called Him Melch. Priest, that made Him High Priest. Pursuing this thought, he states here that, Son as He was, Christ by the way of suffering learned His obedience. Not ἔμαθεν, but ἔπαθεν; not that **he learned**² but that **he suffered**³ is the emphatic notion here. There is no logical force in saying: "although being a son He learned obedience." For whether **learning** or **obedience** be emphatic, both are what is to be expected of a son. It is, however, quite logical in itself, and consistent with the context, and with ii. 10, to represent that Christ, though a Son, to whom obedience was natural, was called to learn and show what *His* obedience was in this way of suffering, so unlike what a son might look for, and so unlike what others might look for in a relation like His. The article joined to **obedience** (τὴν ὑπακοήν) designates it as the obedience that was His, and calls for no previous mention of the obedience.⁴ The suffering referred to was not that described in ver. 7, but that for which the experience of ver. 7 prepared Christ. By reference to ii. 10, 18, it is evident that the suffering was that by which He was perfected as the Captain of salvation, *i. e.*, His dying. This makes it plain that the Author does not mean in ver. 7 that Christ's prayer was granted in the form that He requested. Following the statement "He was heard," our ver. 8 affirms indirectly, that Christ was *not* spared death, by affirming what was His experience in suffering death.

By **obedience** here, cannot be intended that perfection of moral character that consists in conformity to the moral law.⁵ It were absurd to suppose that the Author could mean that Christ only

¹ Luke xxii. 43.

² Against Lün., Del.

³ With von Hof.

⁴ So von Hof.; comp. Kühner, Gramm II. p. 515.

⁵ Against Angus.

learned that when He came to die; and it is inconsistent with all that is represented of Him, by our Author as well as others, to suppose that this was a matter of learning with Him. That obedience was natural and necessary to Him. But to suffer death was neither necessary nor natural to one that was sinless, and who was, moreover, God's own Son. It was necessary only as being the will of God "in bringing sons to glory,"¹ and in making that Son the High Priest by whom He would bring them. Obedience to that purpose of God was different from all other obedience. It was Christ's obedience, and the obedience of no other. What one learns is his, and is not his without learning. So obedience is learned. And by suffering death, that obedience involved in His dying became Christ's. Our ver. 8 is a pregnant statement. Its most obvious import, viz., that Christ suffered death, because obvious and understood, is not expressed, while other notions important to the subject are expressed, because they need to be expressed in order to be noticed. "In connection with the statement that Christ was glorified to be High Priest, not by Himself but by God His Father, we are reminded of the fact that He so learned obedience that to Him, who as Son might have expected something else, befell that which He suffered. Thereby it is noted, that it was not easy for Him to submit to this suffering; He dreaded it, and prayed to Him that was able to save Him from death. Neither was His prayer unheard. Only, the hearing consisted in relieving Him of the dread, and not in dispensing Him from the suffering."²

Ver. 9. **And being perfected, he became unto all them that obey him [the] cause of eternal salvation, 10. being greeted by God, High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.**

The Apostle has showed how God glorified Christ to be High Priest in that way that made Him the antitype of the legal high priest (vers. 1-4 and 7, 8). Now, in the second half of this long relative sentence that begins (ver. 7) with "who," He represents how He is greater than the legal high priest, by affirming that He is **cause of an eternal salvation**, and that, corresponding to

¹ ii. 10.² von Hof.

this difference, His high-priesthood is **after the order of Melchizedek**. The condition of Christ wherein this became true is subsequent to that expressed by "the days of His flesh" (ver. 7), and is expressed by **being perfected** (τελειωθεῖς); for there is manifestly such an antithesis in these expressions themselves, and also in the way in which they appear in this extended relative sentence.¹ When He was perfected Christ **became** what is now described; by which is meant, that without that which is called **perfected** He would not be such. Here the meaning for **perfected**, established at ii. 10, becomes apparent. It expresses that fitness to be the cause of salvation, which was the goal of His earthly existence and the supreme achievement of His mediatorial work; just as **perfected**, when predicated of "**them that are sanctified**" (x. 14), describes the fitness of those that are saved to share the glory of Christ's exaltation, and to enter the vail whither He has entered a forerunner for them (vi. 19, 20).

He became cause of eternal salvation. This effect of His high-priestly agency describes something very different from what the legal high priest effected, and infinitely superior; and the Author develops its meaning further on.² But for the present we must identify the **salvation** with what we have learned the meaning of that word to be at i. 14; ii. 3, 10. The subjects of this saving efficacy are described as **them that obey him** (Christ). The Author has just described (ver. 8) how Christ was obedient as a Son to the Father; and what he now describes is represented as following on that obedience, and the *προσαγορευθεῖς* = **saluted**, sets it in the light of reward. The present mention of the subjects of salvation as **them that obey Christ** expresses, therefore, a parallel, according to which our obedience to Christ corresponds to His obedience to the Father, and our salvation can only follow that, as His high-priestly power to be the cause of everlasting salvation could only follow His obedience by which He was perfected. This identity of relation between His obedience and that which followed His being perfected, and our obedience and the salvation we receive in consequence, is con-

¹ See above before ver. 7.

² See x. 1-18.

firmed by the Author's exchanging further on ¹ the expression **eternal salvation** for "perfected forever." By the present expression for those that are saved, and by calling Christ (*αἰτίας*) **cause of salvation**, the Author expressly signifies, that the salvation is not attainable apart from Christ, but that he is its Author and possessor.²

Being greeted by God High Priest after the order of Melchizedek continues that reference that the Author introduced at ver. 6, as was noticed above. The time of this **greeting** is not to be understood as that of Ps. ex. ; for **being perfected** expresses the time for what is here described ; moreover, the notion of **High Priest** is foreign to the Psalm.³ "Nor does this clause explain the principal sentence [*i. e., how* Christ became cause of salvation] ; for that needs no explanation.⁴ Neither is this clause the mere announcement of a new theme.⁵ But it expresses wherewith that eventuated which forms the contents of the principal sentence. When God received Christ to Himself, He greeted Him as High Priest, on the ground of what He had high-priestly done in the days of His flesh, and more, as High Priest according to the measure of the position of Melchizedek, the royal Priest. For He bade Him sit at the right hand of His throne, in order to give them that believed in Him the benefit of high-priestly atonement in the quality of a Priest that shared the superterrestrial majesty of God. Thus, the fulfillment of the Psalm word, that represents the King of God's people as a Priest who is antitype of Melchizedek, is combined with the doing of Christ while living in the flesh that was antitypical of what the legal high priest did ; and both together, that God made His suffering death the emergence of His earthly life, and that He raised Him on high to Himself, were the way by which He glorified Him to be High Priest, and then, moreover, to be High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."⁶

Let us now pause to remember, that our passage v. 1-10 forms a connected representation that is a unit ; and that it is at ver. 1 connected by "for" with iv. 15, 16. It is the proof and illustra-

¹ x. 14.² Comp. Del.³ So von Hof.⁴ Against Lün.⁵ Against Ebrard.⁶ von Hof.

tion of the truth affirmed iv. 15, that we have in Jesus a High Priest that can sympathize with our infirmities, and it reiterates the thought that He is "a great High Priest that has traversed heaven," (iv. 14) by representing Him received by God with **the salutation, high priest after the order of Melchizedek** (ver. 10). As the statement of iv. 15 was in order to justify the cheering exhortation: "Let us approach with boldness the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for timely help" (iv. 16), so, too, this extended proof and illustration is presented for the same end. At x. 19 sqq. the Apostle reiterates essentially the same exhortation, after giving amplified proof and illustration of some of the truths involved in our passage v. 1-10; and the exhortation there is given in plainer terms as it comprehensively gathers up and enforces the chief results of the extended discussion that precedes it (vii. 1-x. 18). The exhortation there and at iv. 16 is specifically applied to the "seed of Abraham" (ii. 15), who were put under the administration and operation of "the word spoken by angels" (ii. 2), that made them transgressors (ii. 2) and could not do more (x. 2, 3). For this Christ brings "great salvation," which is the only means of "escape" (ii. 3). This was provided by "the grace of God," who would thereby, as the only way that "became him," "bring many sons unto glory" (ii. 9, 10). In our passage (v. 1-10) the Apostle has displayed this Saviour as "a merciful and faithful High Priest" (ii. 17), in whom the people of God may confide, and through whom they may approach with confidence to obtain the help their case requires. And what Israelite, that knew and believed what our passage represents, might not come with joyful assurance to God's throne, that is now, for him who obeys Christ, a throne of grace?¹ And what Gentiles (for the application to their case is obvious), what Gentiles, who, as Paul says, when speaking of such, "are a law unto themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. ii. 14, 15), may not come with the same joyful assurance, pressed as they are by the law of conscience to feel the need of the same salvation?

¹ Comp. von Hof.

The Apostle has, in ver. 10, expressed what, in the sequel, we find to be the theme that he actually develops at considerable length vii. 1—x. 18, viz., the high-priesthood of Christ and its unique character as typified by Melchizedek. It is thus evident that it is his present purpose to pursue this subject as he afterward does. But before he thus launches out, he makes a digression (vii.—vi. 20), in which he administers rebuke and warning and exhortation with truly apostolic authority. First, we have the rebuke v. 11–14; in which the Apostle reproaches his readers with culpable backwardness in learning, on account of which he intends to impart to them very full instruction, yet finds it difficult to explain to them what he has to impart on the subject expressed in ver. 10.

Ver. 11. Concerning which we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.

We translate ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \omicron\upsilon$) **of which**, and not “of whom” because the reference cannot be to any person named in ver. 10 taken simply as a person, but to the whole notion of Christ as there presented. The determining evidence of this must, as said above, be found in the sequel. Only the Author himself can determine for us the reference of the ambiguous pronoun $\omicron\upsilon$; and only in vii. 1—x. 18, do we find what can serve to enlighten us in this respect. A survey of the matter presented in that sequel shows that we must not translate: “concerning whom;” understanding the reference to be to Christ.¹ “For such an expression as this would hardly here be used, seeing that the whole epistle hitherto [as well as in all the sequel] has been concerning Him.”² Neither can we understand the reference to be to Melchizedek.³ For, as a matter of fact, the Author expresses himself very briefly about Melchizedek. But Christ, a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, *i. e.*, Christ, a Priest of a unique order, as typified by Melchizedek, and Christ, a Priest in heaven, and as such a High Priest whose ministry is for the whole people, and “a High Priest forever,” as the Author further defines of his subject vi. 20, this subject we find to be actually the theme of the Author’s subsequent discourse, which, for amplitude, fully answers to his

¹ As Lün.² So Alford.³ As de Wette, Alford.

affirming that **he has much to say**, and, for substance, justifies his declaring it **difficult of interpretation**. To this whole subject, as expressed in ver. 10, does the *ὅ* of our verse refer,¹ and so we must translate : **Of which.**

In affirming that what he has to say is **difficult of interpretation**, the Author means that it is hard for *him*² to find a way of representing it to his readers that must be at once an adequate representation of the truth and a clear explanation of it. He blames this difficulty on his readers, saying this is so : **since ye are become dull of hearing**. Saying : **ye are become** (*γενήνατε*) implies that it was once otherwise with them, and that the present dullness has come about by their own fault.³ It is not with having forgotten what they had learned that the Apostle reproaches them, but with having lost the aptitude to learn. So they have become sluggish where it was important to make further acquisitions than those they so readily made at first. In illustration of the fault with which he charges them, *as it affects the present need, and not as a mere: for instance*, the Apostle proceeds :

Ver. 12. **For when, on account of the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, not of solid food.**

The scrutiny of our Author's discourse from i. 1-3, to the present point, reveals a consecutive and consistent order of thought that holds strictly to the subject in hand. And as we proceed, we shall continue to observe the same thing. It is just, then, to assume that such is the case in the present language, and that the Author is not indulging in expressions of a general and comprehensive nature, but expresses himself only with respect to the subject in hand. Interpreting him thus, we will not assume that he expresses himself here in generalities, and thus we will find no room for perplexities that puzzle many readers⁴ in respect to the antitheses of the context, and its alternations of metaphorical and literal expressions.

¹ So von Hof., Del., Davidson.

² So Lün., Alford, Del., von Hof.

³ So Chrys.

⁴ See in Alford and Lün., Lindsay.

Let us then observe,¹ that our ver. 12, comprising two parts, marked and conjoined by *and*, corresponds to the entire ver. 11, with its two parts similarly marked and conjoined. Ver. 11 affirms that the Author has much to say; and correspondingly ver. 12 refers to the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God, that furnish the foundations of that concerning which he has so much to say; while the need of saying so much, *i. e.*, with such amplification, is because those, who, on account of the time ought to be teachers, need themselves to be taught. Again, ver. 11 affirms, as a second matter, that the Author finds it hard to set forth these things with their interpretation because the readers are become dull of hearing; and correspondingly, the second clause of ver. 12 affirms, as additional to what is affirmed in the first clause, that the readers are become such as need milk and not solid food. In all this the Author refers, not to things in general that are to be taught and learned concerning Christian knowledge. Reference to vi. 1, 2, as intimation of what is in the Author's mind, does not, when rightly understood, suggest this. His reference is strictly to the matters pertaining to his subject. When he says: some one must teach you the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, he intimates that he therefore proposes himself to do the needful thing by them. He has already begun to do this in v. 1-3. And in the sequel, especially vii. 1—x. 18, we may see how he continues to do it, and may see in his performance what he means by the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God. Thus we observe, that one after another he rehearses the leading facts relating to Melchizedek (vii. 1-3), the Levites (vii. 11 sqq.), the high priest (viii. 3 sqq.), the Tabernacle (ix. 1-7), sanctification by blood-sprinkling (ix. 15-22); and following each of these is the interpretation that illustrates his great theme: Christ on high, a High Priest unique, and forever, *i. e.*, after the order of Melchizedek.

Reasoning, then, from the facts thus furnished by the Author, we may infer his meaning when he speaks of the beginning of the oracles of God.²

The elements of the beginning of the oracles of God: so we

¹ With von Hof.

² Comp. Angus.

translate τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τ. θ.; and not “the first principles,” making τ. ἀρχῆς qualify τ. στοιχ. adjectively, as is commonly done. And the reason for doing so is, that inference from the observations noted above leads us to suppose that the Author here expressly names **the beginning of the oracles of God**, meaning the divinely revealed things recorded in the beginning of the written word. We have seen at ii. 3 how the Author, in the preaching of the gospel of salvation, distinguishes between the beginning of it, which was done by the Lord Himself, and that which followed in the preaching of those that heard Him. We notice the recurrence of the same notion vi. 1, “the word of the beginning of Christ.” And at ii. 3, we traced the evidences of a similar usage common to the contemporaries of our Author. It would, in itself, be natural enough to distinguish in the same way regarding the word of God spoken in the Old Testament, taking what is delivered by Moses as the beginning, and what comes after as the continuation. That by τ. λογίων the Old Testament is meant in distinction from the New Testament¹ is the presumption from the other instances of New Testament use of the word;² and this is confirmed by the facts of the Apostle’s subsequent discourse as noted above, wherein he deals only with matter recorded in the Old Testament. And that he means by the expression: **the beginning of the oracles** to point *particularly* to the *beginning* of Old Testament revelation is borne out by the fact that in the subsequent discourse vii. 1—x. 18, he confines himself to matter recorded in the Pentateuch. For the quotation of Jer. xxxi. 31–34, quoted in viii. 8 sqq., makes no exception; seeing it is adduced as a divine word for that truth which the Apostle has been establishing by considerations drawn from the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God. Moreover, τὰ στοιχεῖα=**the elements**, as the expression occurs in Gal. iv. 1–9 (*bis.*), so far as it is there applied specifically to the Judaizing tendencies there opposed, denotes the same things about which our Author discourses vi. 1—x. 18, in order to show from those things themselves that, instead of their being ordi-

¹ So Owen in Pool, McKnight, von Hof., etc.

² Acts vii. 38; Rom. iii. 2, 2 Pet. iv. 11.

nances for the present, they are done away by the high priesthood of Christ and all involved in that. And in Gal. iv. 1-9, as here in our vers. 11-13, τὰ στοιχεῖα are represented as being for little children (νήπιος).

In Gal. iv. 1-9 Paul addresses Gentiles that were being ensnared into Judaism. Our Author addresses Jewish Christians who were falling back into Judaism. If, in the former case, τὰ στοιχεῖα, suited only for children, (νήπιος), means "the elements of non-Christian mankind, *i. e.*, the elementary things, the immature beginnings of religion that are the business of those that are outside of Christianity," or, in other words, "the *rudimenta ritualia*, the ceremonial matter of Judaism and heathenism,"¹ then the same expressions used in our verses of those purely Jewish may most likely mean the *rudimenta ritualia*, the ceremonial matter of Judaism exclusively. And such we understand to be our Author's meaning, when he speaks of **the elements**, which he defines more precisely as pertaining to **the beginning of the oracles of God**.

He pointedly affirms that his readers themselves **ought to be teachers**, and as a reason he adds διὰ τὸν χρόνον = **on account of the time**. In what sense the Author means the former depends upon the sense expressed by the latter. It is common to understand διὰ τ. χρόνον to mean: "for the long time," viz., that the readers have been believers.² And this, beside being a well supported idiomatic meaning,³ seems to be suggested by the γεγόνατε = **ye are become**, (vers. 11, 12), which implies a previous condition when they were otherwise, *i. e.*, not dull of hearing and not needing milk. Following this, then, the Author seems to intimate by διὰ τ. χ. the long time they have been conversant with the things in questions, or been taught them, and to give that as a reason why they ought by this time to be themselves teachers of them. But if, as has been observed above, the Author is not expressing himself in generalities, but with strict reference to the subject on which he means to discourse, then

¹ See Meyer on Gal. iv. 3.

² So Chrys., Δείκνυν ἐνταῦθα πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνον πεπιστευκότας αὐτοίς.

³ See Lün., Alford.

several things appear that are quite incompatible with this common acceptance of the words we are considering. First, the Author must mean that his readers ought to be teachers, not of Christian truth in general, but of such truth as he is about to impart himself. Second, it is not apparent how this "oughtness" (ὀφειλόντες) in their case could arise from the length of time that they had believed, unless it appears plain that during the period of their being Christians they were taught such things. Nothing of the sort, however, is plain, but all the evidences are to the contrary. We need only appeal to the New Testament scriptures themselves, and ask: where would we ourselves be with respect to the chief matters taught in this epistle, were we without this epistle itself, we who have been so much longer Christians? Reflection on these facts forbids our understanding the Author to be blaming his readers for ignorance of these things, or that he intimates that they ought to be teachers of them. And recurring to the context, we observe that his expressions do not actually affirm or even imply as much. He blames them for dullness of hearing, not for ignorance of what he has now to impart. He implies (εγγόνατες) that once they were otherwise, *i.e.*, that they were apt to learn, not that they once knew what they have now forgotten. For this reason (the one actually given and not those we deny) he intends to instruct them by an accumulation of illustration, yet will find it hard to do it in a convincing manner. There is nothing in this that necessarily involves the notion that his readers ought to know already the things they are now to be taught. And if reflection on known facts, as noticed above, makes it extremely improbable that they could have known such things as the Author proceeds to teach them, we are precluded from supposing that the Author means to intimate that they ought both to know and teach them, if his words can have another and very plain meaning. As for his meaning in general that they ought to be teachers, we repeat, that such generalities are inconsistent with the Author's manner of holding strictly to what belongs to his subject, and we may add, that his way of mentioning heads of doctrine, vi. 1, 2, as something that may be passed by, taken with what we have already

observed as to the religious status of his readers,¹ intimates capacity enough to be teachers in a general way.

We take the meaning of διὰ τ. χρόνον to be what has been suggested by Owen, but not insisted on by him. "It may *intend the nature of the season* they were under. There is no inconvenience in this sense, and it hath much good instruction in it; but I will rather adhere to that which is more commonly received."² **On account of the time**, the Apostle says, and he means the time referred to by "To-day" (iii. 15; iv. 7), especially as made portentous by the fact that it is "after so long a time"³ (μετὰ τοσούτον χρόνον). It was thus a period (χρόνος) in contradistinction from a "season" or "point" of time (καιρός). It was a time to exhort one another every day, "lest their hearts should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (iii. 13). It was a time near its end. His readers, he says, referring later to the same time, "see the day approaching" (x. 25), and that day would end the time of gracious opportunity. For all that would fail to use it to escape, "the day" must be one in which they could only look for fiery judgment to devour them. *Such a time had in itself all the motives and suggestions for teaching.* In the other references to it, just cited, these motives and suggestions are pressed by the Author on his readers, and he urges them to attend diligently their meetings (x. 25), and to keep up daily exhortations (iii. 15; x. 25), the chief substance of which must be to point to the signs of "the day approaching," the nature of the crisis, and to warn against the deceitfulness of sin, especially as it appeared in the aims and efforts of those whom the Apostle designates as "the adversaries" (x. 27). And all such exhortation *was teaching*, and those who imparted it *were teachers*, who felt that they **ought to be teachers on account of the time**. And that is what our Author means when he says of his readers, **ye ought to be teachers on account of the time**. Nothing but the fact that it has been so commonly misconceived, justifies so many words in establishing a meaning so simple as a matter of translation, and so consistent with the Author's whole discourse.

¹ See *e. g.*, p. 9 sqq.

² Owen *in loc.* Comp. Alford, for others that entertain this.

³ Del.

The Apostle says, that instead of being teachers (by which he means they ought to be teaching, for the time presses so), the readers **need to be taught**. That expresses the whole extent of antithesis intended. It does not comprehend also the matter to be taught. That might be, and actually was different. **They** ought to be teachers as the time furnished the motive and the theme. And after imparting to them the instruction he has in mind, the Author presses then to diligence in such teaching (x. 24, 25). But they are not doing so; and it is because they are ignorant of the nature of the crisis, and of most fundamental things concerning Christianity. Therefore, they have need that some one teach them in that respect. They are held in bondage by the ceremonial law, and they must be set free as children become free by attaining their majority. This necessitates *their* teacher "to teach them the elements of the beginning of the words of God." When the Author says: ye have need **again** "that some one teach you," the **again** does not imply that they are to be taught over again what they once learned, but only that they are again to become learners, while they are taught the things mentioned. As said already, the antithesis extends only to this: instead of being teachers themselves, they again need to be taught.

The Apostle adds: **and are become such as have need of milk,¹ not of solid food**. It is usual to understand the Apostle to say here metaphorically what he has said literally in the foregoing clause of our verse. But having noted as above the correspondence between the vers. 11 and 12, and their several clauses conjoined by "and," we find in our present clause an additional notion corresponding to the statement of ver. 11: "ye are become dull of hearing," yet not its metaphorical equivalent. The metaphor expresses figuratively a truth concerning those that are dull of hearing, which, like the dullness of hearing, makes it hard for the Author to explain what he proposes to teach when he teaches the elements of the oracles of God. What he affirms of the readers does not imply that he must give them milk, and not solid food,

¹ *καί* = "and" omitted by Tisch., Treg., W. & H.

and that he intends, therefore, to give them intellectual food of that sort. It were as reasonable to suppose that, because they were dull of hearing, he must be content with their hearing little, and that he meant to be so. Whereas, on the contrary, he means that they shall hear much, and that they must, therefore, sharpen their hearing. And so in affirming what he does in the present clause, the Apostle, while blaming his readers with having got to need milk, means that it makes the difficulty in giving them solid food, *yet implies that it is solid food that they must have*. To this second clause exclusively he adds the explanatory words of

Ver 13: For everyone that partakes of milk is unskilled in right speech, for he is a babe.

And in this the Apostle pursues the thought of verse 11, when he says that what he has to impart is difficult of interpretation. He traces it to the character of those who are dull of hearing. Their being such as needed milk, made **right-speech** unsuited to them as it is to babes. To babes on their mothers' breast one uses baby talk, and not the language that is fitted for grown persons, nor language that adequately represents things as they are. And infants talk to one another in language that is not right-speech. And here we accept for λόγος δικαιοσύνης the rendering proposed by Delitzsch (*in loc*). "As 1 Cor. xii. 8 (on which see Olshausen), λόγος σοφίας signifies the gift of speaking wisely, and λόγος γνώσεως the gift of speaking with understanding, so λ. δικ. signifies ability to speak in accordance with righteousness." "The genitival combination resembles the Hebrew אבני צדק, זבחי צדק, כאוני צדק (*i. e.*, "stones, sacrifices, scales of righteousness").¹ But with von Hofmann (*in loc.*), we would modify this interpretation, adding: "Only this may not be transposed into meaning orthodox speech, but the Apostle appeals to the fact that he who is nourished on his mother's breast with milk does not understand correct language, because he is still under age; in the most exact sense is

¹ See, further, Del. Comp. Grotius. Gen. for adjective; so that is called *justa hominis statura* which attains to a full height; so mammon of righteousness (*justitiae*) *i. e.*, true riches. (Luke xvi. 11, 12).

νήπιος.” By this interpretation we escape imputing to the Author a mingling of figurative and literal expressions, and this is no small weight in its favor. We have already noticed the coincidence of the mention of τὰ στοιχεῖα and νήπιος in our passage and in Gal. iv. 1-9, which seems to justify the usual understanding, viz., that the Apostle means, by “the elements,” milk for babes. And this may be allowed consistently with the foregoing explanations, if only it is not understood that *teaching* the elements, such as the Apostle says is necessary for his readers, is giving milk to babes. His readers were drawn to use those elements of ceremonial concern in the way that pertained to a childish minority in religion. Discourse about such elements among themselves, and as they expected to be talked to about them, could only be childish and incorrect speech. For that very reason they needed to be taught, about those very elements of the beginning of the oracles of God. That teaching, however, will be discourse in correct speech, representing those elements in their true meaning and intent. Agreeably to this the Apostle proceeds :

Ver. 14. **But for full-grown men there is the solid food, for those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and bad.**

These words are not meant merely to round off the sentiment of the foregoing verse by its antithesis, saying that solid food is only for those full grown.¹ It affirms what is the food proper for those full-grown.² This turn of thought is denoted by : **those full-grown** (τελειών) being put emphatically foremost in the sentence. The following participial clause in apposition with τελειών explains how those that are full-grown were qualified to receive the solid food. Their senses, by reason of practice, that comes itself from frequent use, are skilled in distinguishing good and bad. In all this, as in ver. 13, the Author means his words to have their direct and proper sense, without blending physical and spiritual meanings.³ Thus good and bad mean things so pronounced by the test of the senses,⁴ and especially the sense of taste.⁵ And *all this homogeneous representation* he intends as a

¹ Comp. Davidson; against Alford.

² So von Hof.

³ Against Alford.

⁴ So von Hof.

⁵ Comp. 2 Sam. xix. 36.

figure of what is true in divine learning, and in receiving spiritual food. He has expressly said that his readers have become such as need milk, not solid food; in other words, infants. He cannot, therefore, mean here to imply that really they are full-grown, or that, in view of the long time that they have been Christians, they must be dealt with as if they were.¹ The meaning we have obtained from "on account of the time," obviates such confusion of notions. The readers are infants, and, being unfitted for solid food, the Apostle will so treat them. Not that he means to give them only milk, or even milk at all. Nor must we take it that he means to give them solid food,² as if that were the only alternative. The very images he uses leave room for thinking of something between. But the Author does not leave that unexpressed. There is the transition between using milk as babes and using solid food as the full-grown. Those that are full-grown have *by a process* reached the condition that uses solid food. Their organs of sense have been developed by exercise (γεγυμνασμένα)³ with a view to⁴ distinguishing between good and bad. And this comes about as a matter of habit or use.⁵ All this is homely truth, or rather fact.

It is unreasonable to suppose that the Author adds this participial clause merely as an amplification of the notion: "those full-grown," or as the qualification of *τελείων*.⁶ As an explanation of who are full-grown, it is needless; as merely a physiological explanation of how they can bear solid food, it is a trifling digression; as qualifying *τελείων*, denoting the kind of adults that may have solid food, as if some adults may not have it, it is absurd. And yet such a physiological observation is too remarkable to be introduced without a special purpose. It *has* point and fitness as reminding, that those not full-grown so as to be fitted to receive solid food, may become such; in other words, that immature Christians, who are unequal to receiving and using

¹ Against von Hof, Davidson.

² Against Davidson.

³ Connects directly with *πρὸς διάκρ. κ. τ. λ.* exclusive of *ἐχόντων*. ⁴ Alford.

⁵ *διὰ τὴν ἐξιν*, not, "by use," which *διὰ* with accus. forbids (see Alford), and would be tautological taken with the connected expression; but "on account of habit," assigning the reason of the thing predicated. ⁶ Alford.

such doctrine as is the support and comfort of mature Christians, may become like the latter. It will come about by gradual development, by exercising their spiritual organs of perception and apprehension. And the Apostle proposes to treat his readers in this way, using such a discipline. He does not mean to give them milk; neither does he mean to treat them as full-grown and give them freely solid food. He means to lead them on to the full-grown condition; as he says, vi. 1: "let us press on to full-growth." And it will be found, as we progress in the study of our Author from the present point onwards, that he imposes on his readers a discipline of learning that admirably corresponds to the process by which one attains to the full-grown condition that freely and habitually uses solid food. At every step, and by presenting successively a variety of matters, the spiritual faculty is exercised in distinguishing between the spiritually good and bad. Thus, as a matter of habit, the learner comes to reject what is noxious, and to keep and use what is good, as the adult rejects the rind of the melon, and eats only what is proper food. Of course, in this process, solid food is given. But not as one gives it to the full-grown. It is as one gives meat and fruits to small children, teaching them in the very act what to use and what to throw away. Nothing could more accurately describe what the Apostle does in vii. 1—x. 18 with reference to the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God. His readers were for eating the shell. He teaches them to throw away the shell and eat the kernel.

VI. 1 a. Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ let us press on to full-growth.

The **wherefore** (ὅτι), as already intimated, refers to what is represented in v. 14. By that, the Apostle has signified that there is a process by which the full-grown became qualified to use solid food. By such a process, his readers may be similarly qualified, and in that sense press on to full-growth. The possibility of this furnishes the motive for undertaking it, and thus he says: **wherefore**. This logical sequence, which seems obvious where once stated, shows that by τελειότης is meant the same notion as τέλειος expresses, v. 14, viz., **full-growth**. It is thus

the **full-growth** itself that the Apostle sets up as the thing to be aimed at; and he presents this very properly as the goal for those whom he has pronounced to be as babes (v. 13). And this seems to settle the much-debated question: in what sense does the Apostle use the first person plural? about which expositors are equally divided.¹ It is not with reference only to himself. This might seem the most probable, did: **let us press on to full-growth** mean: let us consider the higher doctrines of Christianity and use solid food. With such a meaning the Author would be resuming the use of the first person plural, as he used it v. 11, and would intimate his purpose to impart something of the "much discourse" there referred to. We feel, however, that there is something strange and improper in encouraging his readers to neglect, even for the present, such foundation matters as are mentioned in our vers. 1, 2, in favor of learning deeper mysteries. But if the proposed goal is to attain to **full-growth**, it is the readers that are to make this attainment, and not the Apostle; and he proposes this goal in the first person plural as offering himself to help them to it.

Presenting **full-growth** as the goal, it is a condition, a *status* the Apostle would bring about. Consequently, nothing in this expression itself affirms one way or other that what the Apostle proposes to teach is solid food or the contrary. "For those full-grown there is the solid food," he has said v. 14. For those *pressing on to full-growth*, we ought to infer, there is something different needed. And babes have need of milk, he has said, v. 12, 13. We must equally infer, therefore, that, for those emerging from infancy and qualifying themselves as full-grown, something else is needed. What *is* needed, according to the Author, we may infer only from what he expresses v. 14, viz., *it is what will exercise their spiritual sense so as to distinguish good and bad*. A discipline of such exercise will lead his readers on to full-growth. Such a discipline he proposes when he says: **let us press on to full-growth**.

In leading his readers in such a discipline, the Author must assume a point of departure, and make such a selection of matter

¹ See Alford, Lün.

as will best conduce to the desired result. And both of these things he does in the most express manner. He expresses the former by saying : **Leaving the word of the beginning of Christ.** He expresses the latter by saying :

Ver. 1 b, 2. **Not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith on God, and of doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**

For it is erroneous to suppose, as is commonly done, that these two participial clauses mean the same thing, the latter only explaining the precise sense in which the former is intended. This confounding of two things that are distinct produces confusion to which may be ascribed much of the divergence of views among expositors about our verses 1-8. But taking both together, as expressing distinct, yet connected things, we may notice a substantial identity between what is thus referred to and what the Author has already mentioned at ii. 3, 4. In the passage ii. 3, 4, the Author represents the preaching of the gospel in two parts, viz., that which he describes as "a salvation that took a beginning to be spoken by the Lord." And then that : "it was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God bearing witness along with them, by signs and wonders and divers powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His will." The two parts thus distinguished are reflected in the clauses before us, and contemplated in the same relation.

The former expresses the beginning of all knowledge of Christ and interest in Him, and is the foundation of Christian life in the sense of the material that constitutes the foundation, as in Eph. ii. 20. The latter refers to the continuation of what is thus begun in the way of confirming it (*i. e.*, making *βέβαιος* = steadfast). The latter was the proper Apostolic work. The former, as a finished work, must be forever the same.¹ The latter would vary with circumstances, especially, according as the Apostles and other ministers would be dealing with those that heard the gospel for the first time, or with such as had known and confessed it a longer or shorter time. The former would

¹ xii. 2; xiii. 8.

also, indeed, be a concern of Apostolic ministry. For they must give an account of Christ's ministry on earth. And a suitable designation for that would be : **the word of the beginning of Christ.** And thus¹ Mark entitles his gospel : "The beginning of the gospel of Christ." Such, we may infer, was the Apostle Peter's own way of naming that part of his instruction that comprised an account of the acts and sayings of Christ. We make this particular reference to Peter, because Mark was long his companion, and, according to reliable tradition, wrote his gospel under the influence of that Apostle.

Our Author, then, proposes to **leave the word of the beginning of Christ**, as something well known, and not needing to be repeated, while he would have his readers press on to full-growth. And by this he does not mean to waive aside the consideration of it, to leave it behind as needing no consideration. Nor does he intimate that it is inferior, in any sense, to the matter he uses. He rather makes it his point of departure, and thus, as it were, his base, and assumes it as the premise of what he is about to say. And notably the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, all matters pertaining to the word of the beginning of Christ, constitute a most important part of the subsequent discourse.

Designating, thus, his point of departure, the Author also intimates that he makes a selection of matter that will conduce to the result he aims at, viz., pressing on to full-growth. He intimates this negatively : **not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, etc.** The naturalness of thus noticing things he proposes not to treat of appears plain enough when we observe the relation between our vers. 1, 2 and ii. 3, 4. The mention at ii. 3 b, 4, shows what was the common way of confirming what began with the word of the beginning of Christ. It was, therefore, that which his readers might expect him to pursue. And this fact, together with the fact of having already mentioned it, and that, too, as something not to be neglected without peril, makes it quite expedient that the Author, while preferring other matter, should show that he does not overlook this.

¹ Comp. above on ii. 3.

Such a preference of other matter of discourse to the topics he mentions expresses no judgment as to their intrinsic or even relative importance. It only intimates, that what is waived aside suits the Author's present purpose less than what he actually uses. With the object he has in view and the situation to which he speaks, the Author will use matter of discourse that will discipline Jewish Christians tending back to Judaism, in distinguishing between good and bad. Thus we may regard it as a great mistake, to assume, as is commonly done, that the Apostle intimates, that what he proposes to impart is of the nature of solid food, compared with the word of the beginning of Christ, and with those things he mentions as pertaining to foundation. It must be a relief to most minds to escape such an inference. For it is by no means plain how the subjects treated in the subsequent discourse are deeper or higher than the truths of Christianity that must be denoted by the summary given in our verses 1. 2. And, on the other hand, it is obviously quite as impossible to regard such matter as follows in the epistle as being merely elementary matter, or milk; for it presents truths and presents them in a way that calls for the best exercise of a robust spiritual understanding.

In turning to consider the several things pertaining to foundation that the Author announces a present purpose not to treat of, we may preface, as something obvious, that what the Author names only to dismiss, does not call for comment from us in order to understand what he *does* proceed to teach. His few and comprehensive words of mention (vers. 1, 2), have, however, been commonly treated by expositors at considerable length.¹ But the labor expended in this way, except to correct erroneous interpretations, seems very much as if one were to attempt a labored exposition of the Apostle Peter's meaning, when he proposed putting up three tabernacles when Christ was transfigured; wherein the record itself explains that *he* did not know what he was saying.² As our Author mentions several heads of doctrine only to express the purpose of saying nothing about them, we

¹ Comp. Del., Alford.

² Luke xix. 33.

consequently can *know* nothing of them beyond what may be plain in the names themselves, as interpreted from other sources. These names conveyed definite notions to his readers. They do not equally so to us, as is manifest from the debates about them among expositors. If it were true, as is commonly supposed, that the Author means to designate certain heads of doctrine that are primary elements of Christian instruction, and which he passes over for that reason, then, of course, the inquiry as to what he means must have the interest usually felt in scrutinizing what he says here. Though the real interest of that inquiry is the difficulty of seeing how such matters of doctrine can be elementary in the sense of ever being something to leave behind, as one does his A. B. C.¹ But with the understanding of the Author's aim that we have reached, we have only to notice how the topics he waives aside suit that aim less than the topics he proceeds to present and illustrate. At present we can only notice how they might be fitted for his purpose, leaving the greater fitness of the topics he prefers instead, to appear when we come to consider what he actually says about them. As has been already intimated, this present fitness may be, as we think it is, wholly determined by the situation of the readers, and not by the nature of the subjects named. As a matter of fact, whether we treat them as simply things to know, or as subjects to discipline the spiritual mind in distinguishing good and bad, and at the same time actually confirming them in the good (which we regard as the Author's real aim), the matters of doctrine now mentioned are actually treated in the New Testament in a way to make them quite the peers of those matters the Author prefers for present treatment. On **repentance from dead works and faith toward God**, compare Rom. i.-ix.; Gal. iii.—v. 12. On **the resurrection of the dead**, compare 1 Cor. xv.

The Apostle expresses a choice of material for instruction (negatively) by : **not laying again foundation**. It is common for us to use the figure of a foundation with reference to the idea of a superstructure. And it is usual to understand that the Apostle here means the same. And to this interpretation all are

¹ Del., after Luther, on v. 12.

inevitably led who suppose that he means to discourse on higher Christian truths that imply the previous foundation of elementary truths, and constitute a superstructure to it.¹ But our understanding of the Author's aim leads to no such conception. Moreover, common language often uses the word foundation without involving the additional notion of a superstructure. When we speak of being well-founded in the truth, we mean being firmly established and made steadfast in it, without distinguishing the notions of a foundation and superstructure. And in the New Testament this notion of a foundation (*θεμέλιος*) occurs as much as the other.² The foundation represents the steadfastness, and confirmation, and immovability, of the things concerned; and laying a foundation is establishing and confirming, *i. e.*, instituting in a fashion to make firm and steadfast (*βέβαιος*). And such we suppose is the Apostle's meaning in the present language, as it obviously is at ii. 3, 4. In the passage ii. 3, 4, confirming the word to those that heard the gospel was confirming them, so that they should first accept it with confidence, and then so hold fast to it to the end. And to this notion the Apostle several times recurs.³ Here, then, we note another resemblance between our vers. i. 2, and ii. 3, 4. When, therefore, the Apostle follows the mention of **the word of the beginning of Christ** with the mention of **laying a foundation**, he means making the former and all involved in it sure and steadfast, or, in other words, confirming the readers in the word of Christ, so that they would hold that with boldness firm unto the end. And this reflection reveals, that the present language conveys the notion that the heads of instruction that the Apostle mentions, only to pass from them, would be one way of achieving the result he has in view.

Following *θεμέλιον καταβαλ.* = **laying foundation**, are various nouns in the genitive: **of repentance, of faith, of a doctrine of baptisms**, etc. These genitives do not, as is commonly supposed, describe the material of which the foundation is composed, as is

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 10-12.

² Comp. Luke vi. 48, 49; 1 Tim. vi. 19; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Heb. xi. 10; 1 Peter v. 10; Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 23.

³ iii. 6, 14; vi. 16, 19; xiii. 9.

the case in a similar construction, Eph. ii. 20, where apostles and prophets and Christ are so represented. These are subjective genitives,¹ that express the efficient means of giving foundation. Thus *θεμελίως τὸν θεόν* means what God has founded and made him.² And so the rich man's "foundation against the time to come,"³ might be called a foundation of doing good, and of munificence in good works, and of willingness to share what he has; the things in the genitive expressing the efficient means by which he "lays up in store that good foundation." So in our verses, **repentance, faith, and doctrine of baptisms**, etc., are the efficient means by which a foundation may be laid that would secure the steadfastness of Christians.⁴ The things so mentioned, as far as we know what they mean (and only baptisms is very obscure), would obviously contribute to such a result.

The Apostle mentions first, **repentance from dead works**. This is not repentance in its general sense, which is one of the first things announced as necessary to salvation. It is a particular operation of repentance. **Dead works**, as an expression, recurs again ix. 14, and no where else in the New Testament. Its use in ix. 14, shows a meaning that applied in a peculiar way to Jews and their relation to the Levitical institutions. They were works done according to the ceremonial law, and relied on as having a justifying and sanctifying and saving efficacy. They are called **dead** as having no life-power in them, either because done away in the sense of "a dead letter," or, because unable to impart life. Repentance from dead works must come from a knowledge of this truth about them, and show itself in turning from them. The complete notion of repentance always comprehends something to which one turns when turning away from something else. The notion is completed here by: **and of faith in God**. The Apostle does not use the expression: "faith in Christ," which is the usual concomitant of repentance. This may have an explanation in the particular operation of repentance from dead works, peculiar to Jews, when becoming Chris-

¹ Comp. Winer, Gram. p. 186.

² 2 Tim. ii. 19.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 19.

⁴ Comp. *ἐμβαλὼν χερὶς πιστῶν* = "give a promise made by the hand," Kühner, Gramm. II., p. 287.

tians. It may be because faith in Christ is the result at which the instruction would aim, and cannot, therefore, be itself the means of founding itself, which faith on God may be. When, soon after, at ver. 12, the Apostle adduces an example of faith, it is the faith of Abraham on God, with reference to God's promise, which faith was the sole cause of his steadfastness. And the same faith must be to the Christian the **strong confidence of his hope** (ver. 18). The two items, thus far mentioned, are experiences that initiate the Christian's relation to Christ. Those that follow continue that relation by means of the doctrinal considerations involved in them, which confirm the faith already begun.

The Apostle adds : **of doctrine**¹ **of baptisms**, etc. We are led, by the logical sense of the things here enumerated and their necessary relation to : "laying a foundation," to take διδαχῆς = **of a doctrine**, as the genitive directly connecting with θεμελίον = **foundation**, and the other substantives in the genitive as dependent on διδαχῆς.² By **doctrine** here is meant the same sort of thing as by "doctrines," xiii. 9, where "divers and strange doctrines" mean such as Judaizing teachers inculcated concerning "meats." Here the Apostle means doctrines derived from and illustrated by the things referred to in **baptisms, laying on hands**, etc., and derived in the same fashion as he proceeds to derive doctrine from the consideration of Melchizedek, the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, and as he has been doing from consideration of the high-priestly office. By **doctrine**, therefore, he does not refer to the *loci communes* of Christian instruction, such as his readers might be presumed to be already familiar with, certainly to have been taught. The expression of such a definite notion would seem to require, the article : τῆς διδαχῆς. He means such doctrine as *he* would impart were he proposing to *found* and *confirm*³ his readers by considering such matters as he mentions now, instead of those he actually chooses to discourse about. The things he mentions are, by their very names, and especially

¹ Westc. and H., and Lach., read διδαχῆν, instead of διδαχῆς that is common to other editions.

² See in Alford.

³ Comp. θεμελιώσει 1 Pet. v. 10; and βεβαιῶσθαι, Heb. xiii. 9.

as those names are conjoined with "the word of Christ, repentance from dead works, and faith on God," to be understood of Christian things, and not, as some suppose,¹ of Old Testament matters, nor of Old Testament and New Testament matters combined,² as many suppose, at least,³ in reference to **baptisms**.

What the Apostle means by **baptisms**, in the plural, is obscure. If, for the reasons just given, we confine the reference to what was purely Christian, the reference of the plural may be to the frequency of the observance of the ordinance; it being required of every one that believed that he should also be baptized.⁴ And discourse on this (not merely on the significance of the ordinance itself, but also on the need of every Christian to be baptized) after the fashion of Rom. vi. 1-14, would, *mutatis mutandis*, confirm the conviction that a Christian must no longer live in "dead works;" as in Rom. vi. 1-14, the reasons derived from baptism show how all Christians so baptized must "reckon themselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." A distinction founded on the different words used for baptism, viz., βαπτισμός here and the more common βάπτισμα, has been proposed by Jac. Cappellus, and is adopted by Alford. And accordingly, our βαπτισμός is supposed to refer comprehensively to Christian, Johanneic and Jewish baptisms, regarded as ceremonial washings. The only weighty consideration in favor of this, as opposed to the considerations we have allowed to determine us already, is the recurrence of βαπτισμός, ix. 10. But our Author refers there to the washings in question with a reprobation that leaves no room for imagining that he would make them a topic for doctrinal instruction in any other fashion than appears there.

Of **laying on hands**, is next mentioned, and this so closely conjoined with "baptisms" (by τε) as to make these two items a pair. This is what we might expect from what we learn in the Acts (viii. 15-17; xix. 5 sq.), which gives us our clearest information with regard to that Apostolic practice. In their ministry it followed the administration of baptism, and signified the bestowal

¹ Comp. Macnight.

² As Tholuck in Lindsay, Alford.

³ See Lün.

⁴ So von Hof. Comp. Calvin.

of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and was often attended by miraculous demonstrations. And if we have been correct in tracing as above a parallel between our verses 1, 2, and ii. 3, 4, then we may suppose that, by **laying on of hands**, the Author means to notice, by a briefer expression, what he refers to in ii. 4, as God's bearing testimony with the preachers of the word by signs and wonders and distributions of the Holy Spirit. If we would conjecture how he would likely use this topic to profit his readers in their peculiar danger, we might refer to Gal. iii. 1-5. For there the gift of the Holy Spirit, evinced by the receipt and display of supernatural gifts, being wholly independent of any teaching or observance of Jewish ceremonial institutions, is pointed to as a proof, that God did not lay any such law on Christians, but that Christians, as Paul said of himself, "are dead through law that they might live to God."¹ Certainly the tone of rebuke in that passage, and the general tenor of what is said, would admirably fit in the present context, while the expression : *ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι, νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε* = "having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" presents a remarkable identity both of thought and phrase.

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment make the last pair (τε-και) of the topics mentioned. There is scarcely need for remarking that these two subjects were in Apostolic preaching put boldly front, and announced together in the same breath,² and confessed to be essential Christian truths. How the Apostle might handle the fact of Christ's resurrection in such a way as to found and make steadfast believers that were tempted to let go their hold on Christ for the fallacious confidence of dead works, we may conjecture from recurring again to Rom. vi. 1-11, and also to Phil. iii. 3-11; Col. ii. 20—iii. 1. And for the same purpose, with reference to the **eternal judgment**, we may compare Rom. ii. 1-16, where, according to the Apostle's gospel, Gentile and Jew must alike be judged by Christ in the great day, and thus everything for future life depends on holding to Christ by faith.

The light thrown on the topics mentioned in our vers. 1, 2, by

¹ Gal. ii. 19, comp. J. B. Lightfoot, *in loc.*

² Comp. Acts xvii. 13.

the foregoing reflections and comparisons of Paul's discourses elsewhere, must, we think, make it plain that the Apostle does not mean to intimate that they are elementary Christian things like milk for babes. It is equally plain that they afforded material for instruction that, in competent hands, could be handled in a way to correct and restrain those that might be tempted to forsake Christ for Judaism; and also to afford strong meat or solid food as much as anything the Author actually proceeds to discourse on. Moreover, they would be, according to the manner of Apostolic instruction, the topics the Apostle might be expected to deal with; and thus his passing them by would call for some notice.

Beside these conclusions just expressed, we think the foregoing observations on the topics the Author mentions must prompt the reflection, that these are the topics that Paul would have handled to instruct a situation like the present, and the passages of his letters cited above show how he would have handled them. We think, however, that we see more than this from such evidence. We do not see in the Author only one of like mind with Paul and his peer in argument, but different in his choice of material. We see the evidences that the same Apostle is the Author here, with only the difference that was necessary when writing to Jewish Christians instead of Gentile Christians, or churches composed chiefly of Gentiles. The Apostle continues:

Ver. 3. **Also this we will do if God permit.** The view we have taken of the matters referred to in the participial clause (vers. 1, 2) beginning with: **not again laying a foundation**, etc., makes it very natural to take $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\tau\omicron$ = **this**, as referring to that way of founding the readers.¹ Other considerations confirm this construction. The $\pi\omicron\tau\iota\gamma\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$ (indic.) requires it. The remoter reference to $\varphi\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$ would require $\pi\omicron\tau\iota\gamma\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$ (subj.)² and explains that reading. Moreover, $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron$ is to be referred to the nearest antecedent, unless it is evident that the more remote "is mentally nearer."³ And in vers. 4-6 (which give the reason for

¹ So von Hof.; see others in Alford.

² [Griesb., Lachm.], Bleek, Del., Alford, Lün.

³ Winer Gram. p. 157.

adding : **if God permit**, by showing a situation wherein God may not permit), the point of what is represented is expressed in the words : "impossible to renew to repentance," which reflects the expression : "laying a foundation of repentance." Thus there is a close logical connection, as if the Author said : we will lay again a foundation of repentance, etc., if God permit, for it is impossible to renew some to repentance. Moreover, we may ask, with von Hofmann : why should not God permit one to press on to full-growth as a Christian ? Where is it written that God may not permit one to do well ? We must, therefore, understand, that our verse expresses the purpose of doing what the Apostle expresses may not be done at present. He will do it **if God permit**. And here, from the nature of the doing referred to, we must understand the first person plural to refer to the Apostle himself alone. As for those to whom this purpose would relate, it is evident that they are others than the readers whom the Apostle now addresses ; first from the character of the representation that follows vers. 4-8, and then from the express language to that effect ver. 9 sqq.

The expressed condition of his **doing this** is not the mere *Deo volente*¹ of common discourse.² There are considerations that cause apprehension that God will not permit what the Apostle would do. How this may be, he proceeds to explain in the affirmation of vers. 4-8, which γὰρ = **for** introduces as a reason. But the fact that the Apostle says he will do it if God permit, expressly signifies that it is something God may permit, in which case he will do what is needful to it. And this is plainly intimated with reference to the persons the Apostle proceeds to describe, for he has them in mind. The observation just made should be borne in mind while considering what follows, vers. 4-8. It is an antecedent intimation of the possibility of that which is about to be declared impossible. As such, it requires us to understand the subsequent affirmation with a qualification ; which qualification, we may suppose, is indicated by the context. And we may anticipate so far as to say that the qualification is two-fold. It is impossible, while the doing of the persons

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 7.

² Against Davidson.

referred to is equivalent to crucifying the Son of God ; and, again, if God shall visit such a crime with the swift punishment it deserves. (vers. 6 *b*, 8.)

In order to enter into the thought of the Author at this point, let us recover some of the ground he has already gone over.

At ii. 17, 18 we have noticed that the Author has already introduced what is now to be the topic of discourse for the purpose just expressed, vi. 1. The purpose is "to press on to full-growth." The topic of discourse is "Christ a merciful and faithful Hight Priest in things pertaining to God" (ii. 17) ; which topic the Author has already begun to treat of at iv. 14, and interrupts by the digression v. 11—vi. 20, of which our verses 4–8 form a part. But at iii. 1 the Author presents the subject introduced ii. 17, 18, in a double aspect, viz., "Jesus the Apostle and High Priest," and he first makes Jesus the Apostle the topic of discourse, comparing Him with Moses. The discourse on this topic is comprised in iii. 1—iv. 13, in which the Author first (iii. 1–6) represents the superiority of Jesus to Moses, with reference to the house of God, and then (iii. 7—iv. 13) continues with a digression consisting of a warning (iii. 7–19), followed (iv. 1–13) by exhortation that introduces new matter suited to the general aim of the epistle, *i. e.*, suited to make the readers steadfast in their Christian profession. With regard to the warning (iii. 7–19), we noted in its proper place how its underlying thought is related to ii. 1–3. In both ii. 1–3 and iii. 7 sqq. the readers are treated as they are introduced at i. 1, viz., as the one people of God that had been favored with a word of revelation of God, differing only, as time moved on, in the character of what was revealed. The view-point common to ii. 1–3 and iii. 7 sqq. is that the readers are, as those of old, under the dispensation ministered by angels, with the difference that the Son of God has spoken to them a word that offers them escape from the operation of that angelic ministry, which, attended, as it necessarily was, with transgression, is now attended by impending judgment and punishment. At ii. 1–3 the warning is to escape, as to those that have heard of the way to do so. And what they must escape is the same punishment that was

appointed for the transgression that was the same for all that were under the word spoken by angels. At iii. 7 sqq. the warning differs only in this, that now the readers are treated as persons that had professed to accept the salvation offered, and in whom, therefore, what would before have been only neglect, must now be apostasy. The warning, accordingly, is still more solemn. It is a warning to beware of becoming apostates. But the punishment to be apprehended for such is still the penalty attending the word spoken by angels, of which the example is taken from the embitterment in the wilderness. And it is expressly intimated, that if the readers incur the punishment of apostasy, their doing and its punishment will be, not simply like, but an example of the same thing that occurred in the embitterment in the wilderness (iv. 11). Moreover, we have found that the Author (iii. 12) refers to a definite apostasy that is in prospect, and this gives the motive for that urgency to exhort one another in order to prevent unbelief, treachery and disobedience, and to enter into the promised rest. After this digression of warning, the Author recurs (iv. 14 sqq.) to his subject of ii. 17, 18, discoursing now about Christ as High Priest, which continues to be the subject of discourse, except as it is interrupted by the present digression, v. 11—vi. 20, of which our verses 4—8 form a part.

This digression, too, is, like iii. 7—iv. 13, composed of a warning (v. 11—vi. 8) followed by exhortation, with introduction of new matter thereby suggested (vers. 9—20), suited to the general aim of this epistle. But the view-point is not changed from that of the warning at ii. 7 sqq. This appears from the meaning we ascertained for the words: “ye ought to be teachers on account of the time” (v. 12). It is a time that calls for such teaching as is meant by: “exhort one another while after so long a time it is called: To-day.” It further appears that the view-point is not changed, from the obvious fact that our verses 4—8 represent a situation of actual apostasy, which must be understood to represent the character of that apostasy that the Author has already made a subject of warning (iii. 12). Thus it appears that the present warning is but a resumption of that in iii. 7 sqq. which

differs from the warning already given only in something that marks progress in the thought. *But being a resumption of the warning there, it must assume the notions represented there, as present in the readers mind.* Now, at iii. 6, the Author says of himself and his readers: "we are the house of God if we hold steadfast the boldness and the boast of the hope until the end." In this the holding steadfast till the end is the emphatic notion. And the warning that follows (iii. 7 sqq.) is intended to move the readers to needful diligence in that respect, and it reiterates the very expression again (iii. 14), saying: "we are companions of Christ if we hold steadfast the boldness till the end." That persevering boldness of hope is imperiled by "hardening" that is induced by "deceit of the sin" by which is meant, particularly, the allurements to turn from Christ to Judaism. The consequence of yielding to these seductive influences is *represented in descriptive terms drawn from the embitterment in the wilderness*, which gives the type of what their sin would be and of its punishment. It is the sin of Christians the Author speaks of, and their apostasy would be from Christ, and the thing they must forfeit would be salvation. But, using Old Testament terms of expression, the Author calls their sin: hardening the heart, and the apostasy is said to be from God, and what they forfeit is the promise of God's rest. Yet such representation of Christian things by terms drawn from the ancient situation is perfectly true to the Christian situation. The terms cover both cases; and their very use in this way expresses the essential identity of the two situations better than could be done in any other way.

In the present context (v. 11—vi. 20) the Author warns his readers about the same subject. But in our verses 4—8 he approaches it more closely. In iii. 7 sqq. he warns against the danger of apostasy. Here he represents the state of one that actually has apostatized, and tells what it means. It means a situation that admits of no efforts to renew them to repentance,¹ and for which destruction is at hand. For in the parable by which he illustrates this solemn truth, he adds the trait: "it is rejected and nigh unto a curse, whose end is to be burned."

¹ Comp. xii. 16, 17.

What is thus represented is in order to explain why the condition, "if God permit," is expressed. The situation of actual apostasy is one where God may not permit such efforts to renew to repentance; and thus, to the apostate, such discipline of which the Author now says: **this we will do**, would be in vain. One of the reasons for this is a question of time. God will soon (x. 25) make known His mind toward that state by sending destruction on the apostates. So that *the little time left is one of the factors in the question whether God will permit.*

In this representation the Author moves in the same sphere of notions that prevail in the warning of iii. 7 sqq. The reasonable inference is, that he expresses himself in the same way. In other words, he *represents the situation of apostasy from Christ in terms drawn from that ancient and first apostasy of God's people in the wilderness.* The terms cover both cases; and he does this in order, in an impressive manner, to identify them as essentially the same. So doing, the minds of his readers, reverting naturally to the facts of that ancient apostasy, and its catastrophe, would identify the truthfulness of what is affirmed of the present situation. As corroborative illustration of the Author's manner of blending Old and New Testament notions, we may refer to xi. 25 where, conversely, he represents an Old Testament act by an expression drawn from the Christian situation, and says: Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." And again, xiii. 13 he represents a Christian act by terms drawn from the situation in the wilderness: "Let us go to him without the camp bearing his reproach." Approaching, then, our verses 4-8 from the point of view now ascertained, and with the understanding of the Author's choice of terms just stated, we have a clue to his meaning, and may form a just opinion of the terms he employs. The application of the criterion, thus afforded, will quickly decide whether it is a correct one.

The direct affirmation of vers. 4-8 is that: **it is impossible to renew again to repentance** persons whose character the Author describes. **Impossible** (*ἀδύνατον*) is an unequivocal expression that admits of no mitigation in sense, such as: "very difficult;"¹

¹See authors cited in Alford.

or, impossible in *sensu forensi*.¹ It must be taken absolutely. But the notion expressed by : **renew again to repentance** obviously requires for its understanding a clear notion of the situation referred to by **again**. For it expresses reinstatement **again** in a position previously described. That situation is represented in the terms that describe the persons referred to previous to the condition that is declared to be incapable of renewal again to repentance. These persons are described as : **those having been once enlightened and having tasted the heavenly gift and having become companions of a holy spirit and having tasted a good word of God and powers of a world to come**. These participial clauses we construe as follows :² the article *τοὺς* belongs to *φωτισθέντας* alone, and does not extend to the following participles. This is necessitated by the *ἅπασι* = **once**, which is quite proper as qualifying **enlightened**, but has no propriety as applied to experiences described by **tasting**, and **becoming companions of a holy spirit**. Enlightenment is an experience which, when it comes, is a thing done ; while tasting is something that involves repeated application. Moreover, the *τε*, that adjoins the following participial expressions to *φωτισθέντας*, denotes that they are not coordinate expressions with it,³ but added as expressing notions involved in the fact of having been once enlightened. And this *τε*, with the two following participial expressions conjoined by *καὶ*—*καὶ*, leads up to the adversative *καὶ παραπεσόντας*⁴ (ver. 6).

So construed, the most significant term before us is : **those having been once enlightened**. By *φωτίζειν* is meant simply “to inform” or “give intelligence” of any thing, so that what one was ignorant of he is made to know,⁵ and where he was in the dark he is made to see as in the light. What one was made to know and see is not here expressed. But the expression is used absolutely as at x. 32, as though the matter of enlightenment must be understood. The logical connection of x. 26, 32 shows that illumination in “the knowledge of the truth” is what is meant. And the whole tenor of our epistle, as well as the pre-

¹ Jer. Taylor: Doctrine and Practice of Repentance ix. § 4.

² With von Hof.

³ See Winer, Gramma. pp. 434, 435.

⁴ So von Hof.

⁵ Comp. Eph. iii. 9.

sent context and the context at x. 26, makes it plain, that the Apostle has particularly in mind the knowledge of what was the intent of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, and the efficacy of "the blood of the covenant" there shed to sanctify believers. As has been already noted, the Apostle appropriately says : **once** (ἀπαξ) **enlightened**, because seeing is in its nature something that occurs once for all. What one sees is henceforth to him a visible thing.¹ But by expressing the fact, the Apostle means to note that what the persons he describes do, viz., "crucifying," etc., (ver. 6 b), they do against light and knowledge, and not as if the enlightenment were again "swallowed up by the previous darkness."²

To the "enlightening" the Apostle *adjoins* (by τε—καὶ—καί) three other experiences that are involved in the former as attendants on it. The first of these is : **and having tasted the heavenly gift**. It is misleading to suppose that this expresses something subsequent to the experience denoted by : "having been enlightened." Influenced thus, expositors have named a variety of things as being intended by the heavenly gift, such as remission of sins, joy and peace in believing, the Lord's supper, etc.³ It is not a different thing from what is referred to by : "having been enlightened," that the Apostle means. In Eph. iii. 7-9, Paul names the gospel "of which he was made a minister, according to the gift (τῇν δωρεάν) of the grace of God which was given (τῇς δωρεῆς) unto him according to the working of his power (τῇς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ)," as that by whose preaching he was to enlighten (φωτίσαι) all men. And here the gift has the same meaning with reference to the "enlightening,"⁴ and expresses that the knowledge of the truth was a gracious gift; while **heavenly**, as is always the meaning of ἐπουράνιος,⁵ expresses that it was a matter revealed from God and not before or by other means known on earth.⁶ But the principal notion of the clause before us, and what constitutes the progress of thought, is not in the expression "the heavenly gift," but in γευσάμενους = **having tasted**. This

¹ Comp. Davidson.² Against Del.³ See in Alford.⁴ Comp. John iv. 10, and Lindsay.⁵ Comp. John iii. 12, 13.⁶ Comp. Eph. iii. 5, 9.

denotes a practical experience, attending the knowledge received, that verifies the reality of the latter. It is thus that the Apostle Peter uses the same expression: "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."¹

The next trait that is mentioned of the persons described is: **and having become companions of a Holy Spirit.** We can see no sufficient reason for not rendering μέτοχος = **companion**² here as we have done i. 9; iii. 14. The word occurs in the New Testament only Luke v. 7, beside in our epistle, where it is used i. 9; iii. 1, 14; vi. 4; xii. 8. In all these places "companions" or "partners" gives a good meaning, while in most of them no other meaning is admissible. In the LXX.³ this is the common meaning. Where μέτοχος is joined with a substantive in the genitive denoting a person, then **companion** is the most obvious meaning. It is only because there is a mystical communion between Christ and believers, and the Holy Spirit and believers, that we find it possible to understand μέτοχος, when joined with those names in the genitive, as meaning "partaker," in the sense of receiving something of them. In any other personal connection, as: μέτοχος ἐγώ εἰμι πάντων τῶν φθορομένων σε,⁴ that meaning would be impossible. Thus, though "partakers of the Holy Spirit," in the sense of receiving of the self-impartation of the Holy Spirit, is a correct notion, we may doubt whether μετ. πνεύματ. ἁγίου is intended as the expression of it. Certainly we are justified in understanding it to express that we are **companions of the Holy Spirit**, if we find elsewhere the evidence that this was a familiar notion. Of this there is evidence enough.⁵ The leader of Christians is the Holy Spirit, for "as

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 3.² Wyclif translated the Vulg., *participes* = partners.³ See Schlensuer, *Lex. V. T., sub. voc.*⁴ Ps. cxviii. 63.

⁵ Comp. Neh. ix. 20, "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them waters for their thirst." Isa. lxiii. 10-12, "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. . . . Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him?" Hag. ii. 5, "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." Acts vii. 51, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircum-

many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.”¹ Taking, then, the Apostle’s meaning to be, that the persons described became companions of a Holy Spirit, and comparing the texts given in the foot note, we suppose that here, as at iii. 14, when he says: “we are become companions of Christ,” he intimates a parallel with the experience of those in the wilderness, who were also led by the Spirit, and thus were his companions as they were the companions of Moses their human leader. When he says **companions of a Holy Spirit** (*without the article*) he leaves the word Holy emphatic, as laying stress on *what kind* of a spirit attended them.² This much enhances the sin of “rebelling against and vexing” that Spirit.

The next expression is: **and having tasted a good word of God and powers of a coming world.** We have no hesitation, such as is expressed by others,³ in understanding this expression to have been chosen with reference to the situation in the wilderness. Taken with the foregoing expression relating to the leading of the Spirit, the present expression displays a close parallel to the following words from Deut. viii. 2, 3, “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And . . . he fed thee with manna, . . . that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every (word) that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live (ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι τῷ ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος).”

When we find such parallelism of thought along with such identity of language, and that with reference to an Old Testa-

cised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye.” Heb. ix. 8, “The Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.” Ps. cxliii. 10, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.” Isa. xlviii. 16, 17, “The Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. . . . I am the Lord thy God which leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go.” John xvi. 13, “When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth.”

¹ Rom. viii. 14; comp. Gal. v. 18.

² So von Hof.

³ See Alford.

ment passage so familiar to Jews as was that passage of Deut. viii., we need feel no more hesitation in supposing it to be intended than we do when, in Christian discourse, we meet with a fragment of the Lord's Prayer or of the Apostle's Creed. As representing a Christian notion, **having tasted**¹ signifies, as in ver. 4, the test of actual experience, in reference to the word (ρήμα) of God. As for the latter, the words of Josh. xxi. 43,² show how the contemporaries of Moses understood the expression as he used it, Deut. viii. 3. Joshua said: οὐδὲν διέπεσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ρημάτων τῶν καλῶν ἃν ἐλάλησε κύριος = "there did not fail anything of the good words that the Lord spoke." For Joshua, the קָרָה הַבְּטוּחַ of God was the promise of the land of Canaan. And that promise was the better manna that sustained such life as his in the wilderness; and every demonstration of the truth of the promise before its fulfillment was tasting that word. For Jeremiah and Zachariah "the good word of God" meant another thing suited to their time; but it was a promise also.³ Our Author says: **a good word** (without the article), by which he emphasizes the quality of what he refers to, and also adapts an expression drawn from the ancient situation to the Christian situation, signifying that what he refers to, though not "the good word," was a good word of the same kind. It is a word of promise he means. What the promise relates to is intimated by the following clause closely adjoined by τε: **and powers of a world to come**. So adjoined, and thus dependent upon **having tasted**, the notion thus expressed forms part of the notion of the preceding expression. And the ancient parallel helps us to understand the relation of the two notions. The miracle of the manna was the demonstration of the truth of that word of promise that was the real livelihood of those in the wilderness. By experiencing that and other works of power they tasted the good word that supported their hopes; in other words, had the proof of an actual experience to assure them and make

¹ That γεύσασθαι is followed in this instance by the accus., instead of the genitive as in ver. 4, according to common usage, has had no better reason assigned than the desire to avoid accumulations of genitives.

² Comp. Josh. xxiii. 15.

³ Jer. xxix. 10; xxxiii. 14; Zech. i. 13.

them steadfast in obedience. The persons the Apostle describes had also a **good word of God**, whose truth and reliability were similarly demonstrated by their **tasting powers of a world to come**, to which that word as a promise referred. By **powers** the Apostle means miraculous demonstrations, such as he refers to ii. 4. Describing them as: **of a world to come**, he signifies that the **good word** refers to things of a future world, the meaning we have already obtained from the parallelism involved in the expression itself. By **world** (αἰών) is meant the same as οἰκουμένη μέλλουσα (ii. 5), but here considered temporally as an **age**. "This world to come is not only an object of promise. Its marvelous powers are tasted even here. They are a prelude and foretaste vouchsafed already of that future redemption which is still in progress. The world to come has not yet appeared, but is already present as the hidden background of the world that now is, waiting for its manifestation, and perpetually breaking through the crust that confines it."¹

Having now sufficiently described the previous condition of the persons referred to, the Apostle adds the adversative: **and having fallen away**, which describes their present position. The word παραπίπτω does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. But it is used by the LXX. not seldom, especially to render ἔγρη, with the meaning to "transgress, trespass."² It is in Ezekiel³ that the LXX. most frequently use our verb, with its cognate noun παράπτωμα. And it is at least remarkable that it is in a context that represents precisely the same severe truth that the Apostle is affirming here. "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity . . . shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed . . . shall he die (ἐν τῷ παραπτώματι αὐτοῦ ᾧ παρέπεσε . . . ἀποθανεῖται)."⁴ Nor is it to be overlooked that in the same connection Ezekiel uses imagery that resembles the comparison of our verses 7, 8. "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously (γῆ ἡ ἐὰν ἀμάρτη μοι τοῦ παραπεσεῖν παράπτωμα), then will I stretch

¹ Del.³ Ezek. xiv. 13; xv. 8; xviii. 24, 26; xx. 27.² Comp. Grotius.⁴ Ezek. xviii. 24.

out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, etc.”¹ “As the vine tree among the trees of the forest which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . They shall go out from one fire and another fire shall devour them. . . And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass (καὶ δώσω τὴν γῆν εἰς ἀφανισμόν ἀνθ’ ὧν παρέπεσον παραπτώματι).”² It does not seem likely that these coincidences of thought and expression, beside the mere use of the word παραπίπτω, could have escaped the notice of an expositor like Grotius, and through him of other’s since.³ But though they have been made no account of by others, we cannot resist the conviction that they influenced the Apostle in writing our present context, and that we may refer to these representations in Ezekiel to settle, not only the meaning of the word παραπίπτ., but also the doctrine here set forth. Consequently, we may understand the **having fallen away** to mean a deflection from Christianity like that of the Jews when, in Canaan, they turned to worship the idols of the country. This is something more specific than mere transgression in general. It is in fact apostasy.⁴

Of the persons so defined, the Apostle affirms: **it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.** He says **again** (πάλιν) in antithesis to the “once” (ver. 4), because the **renewing** would be a deed that would be a repetition of a former deed, seeing they had already once been what that deed would make them. By **renewing** (ἀνακαινίζειν) is not meant regeneration.⁵ It is not an accident that the Author uses ἀνακαινίζειν and not ἀνακαινοῦν.⁶ The former must be viewed as a synonym of ἐπιστρέφειν = “to turn one,” as in Lam. v. 21. The latter is a word of Paul’s making to denote the Christian truth of “the redemptive activity of God, corresponding to the creation of man, which, by putting an end to his existing corrupt state, constitutes a new beginning.”⁷ “Closely combined with εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνακαινίζειν denotes a restoration out of the present state of the sinner into which he has fallen by his sin, in the direction of a change of mind that is

¹ Ezek. xiv. 13.² Ezek. xv. 6–8.³ Comp. Lindsay.⁴ See Grotius.⁵ Against Alford, with von Hof.⁶ von Hof.⁷ Cremer, Lex., *sub voc.*

thereby achieved. The change of mind must be return from the wrong way, which it is the sin of the sinner to have taken, and return to the way he left.”¹

We should note that the Apostle says: **it is impossible to renew to repentance**, not that **it is impossible for them to repent**. It is common to discourse on this passage as if the latter were affirmed, or at least involved in what is affirmed. But nothing of the kind is affirmed. The Apostle speaks of the characters in question as the objects of efforts that others might make with reference to their repentance, and as they might be affected by such efforts. And what he says is with special reference to the efforts he expresses himself as ready to make on their behalf, ver. 3. This distinction very seriously affects what the Apostle is commonly supposed to teach in our passage.

It is impossible to effect this, says the Apostle. Why this is so is more particularly indicated in the following clause and by the comparison of vers. 7, 8. But primarily it appears in the antithesis **once** (ver. 4) and **again**. Not that: **having been once enlightened** expresses something that was by intention a once-for-all that *would not* be repeated. But enlightenment is by its nature something that is once for all, and thus excludes a re-enlightenment. To this must be added the explanation that follows: it is impossible, **the while**² **they crucify to themselves the Son of God and put him to an open shame**. We need not take the *ἀνά* in composition here as meaning “afresh.” It means “up,” and refers to the lifting up on the cross by which one is crucified.³ The rendering: “afresh” rather mars than enhances the force of what is said. For the persons referred to did not before crucify Christ, and so their present doing would not for them be doing the same thing afresh. And, though crucifying him who had been crucified *would* be doing it again, that does not need to be stated.⁴ It is *ἑαυτοῖς* that is emphatic, and the double point of what is affirmed is, that “they hang Him up on the cross, where for their part they would have him;”⁵ and that it is the Son of God whom they so crucify; by which glorious name is

¹ von Hof.³ Grotius, von Hof.² Version 1881, margin.⁴ Comp. Davidson.⁵ von Hof.

not only indicated the greatness of the crime as an outward fact, but also that He whom they crucify is known to be such, for they have been enlightened. Doing so **they put him to an open shame**; "they expose him to view as one who got his due when He was crucified. For by turning their back on Him, they declare Him to have been deserving of that which the Jews did to Him, and repeat the act as far as it is now possible to do so."¹

What is now stated of the persons referred to is not an interpretation of what is the spirit and meaning of the *falling away* itself after having been enlightened.² The present participle ἀνασταυροῦντας, separated from παραπεσόντας (aorist) by the expression πάλιν . . . μετάνοιαν, cannot be so construed. *It describes the present doing* of those that have fallen away. It was not a past action, viz., that they apostatized (aorist), that makes the impossibility, but the present action in the situation to which falling away brought them. *It is that present doing that makes the impossibility* of renewing the doers to repentance.³ Enlightened, as they once were, and doing this in their enlightenment, it is impossible to renew in them those experiences that formerly attended their enlightenment. The doing itself, apart from its great guilt, made it impossible; for it is the preaching of Christ crucified that effects repentance, and those that are themselves crucifying Him cannot experience *that* power of the cross.⁴

There is, indeed, a subjective condition in such persons that makes repentance impossible. But in the case here presented it amounts to this: that it is impossible for them to be influenced in opposite directions by the same thing at the same time. While they are crucifying Christ, the cross of Christ cannot crucify them to the world or dead works.⁵

Delitzsch, opposing this interpretation as given by von Hofmann, objects: "that it amounts to the identical proposition, that it is impossible to renew to repentance persons that have

¹ Grotius, von Hof.

² Against Alford, etc.

³ So Harless in his: *Christliche Ethik*, 4te Aufl., p. 130 sq.; von Hof; Farrar, ch. xviii. § 3, Wordsworth.

⁴ Comp. x. 26.

⁵ Gal. vi. 14.

once fallen away, so long as they do not repent." But this is gratuitous mystification. It would have some color if the affirmation were: it is impossible for them to repent. But as the present representation relates to what others may do for their repentance, it has none. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17); may that too be resolved into the identical proposition? We are, moreover, to bear in mind, that repentance here is a particular notion, defined by the representations of vers. 4, 5. It is renewal to the condition there described, and from which the persons have fallen away. That is impossible while they are virtually crucifying Christ.

But, moreover, the guilt of their doing and the wilful perversity of wickedness it reveals is a reason for the impossibility of effecting the repentance of persons referred to.¹ For the Apostle has said: "if God permit" (ver. 3), and it is more important, as *it is ultimately all-determining*, how *God* is affected by what the persons described do, than how *they* are subjectively affected. And the Apostle proceeds (vers. 7, 8) to represent the part of God in the situation described. This he does by a simile that is almost a parable.²

Ver. 7. For land which hath drunk the rain which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for those for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God; 8. but bearing thorns and thistles it is worthless and nigh unto a curse, whose end is for burning.

Let it be noted that what is meant to be expressed in the first part of this parable is, that the land **brings forth to those for whose sake it is tilled**, *i. e.*, the owners, and the *καὶ γεωργεῖται* calls attention to their labor, and what it is for, as added to the influence of the rain, and thus as deserving this return. On the other hand, **that God blesses the land** denotes the interest He has in it, looking for it to be what His rains were intended to make it.

What answers to these traits of the parable is: those that receive the gospel: God that sends it: and the teachers who impart it, such as *e. g.*, the Apostle who writes.³ In the second

¹ Against von Hof, with Lün., Del., Alford.

² Comp. Davidson.

³ So Alford.

part of the parable the land is supposed to have the same rain and labor given to it as in the first. And we must understand God to be the one who shall say whether the land is to be cursed or not.¹ For the one that blesses must be also the one that curses. The denial of His blessing would be a curse. Besides, it is not an estate that is meant, but a widespread territory or country, as is suggested by the traits of rain and many (ἐκτετατός) inhabitants or owners, and God blessing it. Thus, it cannot be the owners that devote the land to burning, as might be in the case of a single estate. Nothing can be further from the Author's thought than the notion of burning over ground to improve its fertility.²

Paraphrasing, then, the parable in the terms of the realities it is meant to illustrate, it expresses that those who enjoy such advantages as the persons described, vers. 4, 5, and who yield the proper fruit to such as the Apostle, that are sent to teach them, shall receive God's blessing. But those who, with the same advantages, yield, not only no good fruit, but the very opposite, viz., of apostasy: are **nigh unto a curse, whose end is for burning**. With the majority of expositors, we understand the **whose** (ἧς) to refer to **the land**. As applied to the persons whose case is illustrated, the **burning** means a destruction, fearful and complete, as burning.³ It is commonly thought⁴ that the Apostle's language in this parable is prompted by a reminiscence of Deut. xxix. 22, 23. But in view of the evidences adduced above under ver. 6, there is more reason to think he was influenced by the passages in Ezekiel there cited. Or, perhaps, we should recognize a reminiscence of both Old Testament passages.

The Apostle says of the land of thorns, that it is **nigh unto a curse**, and we may suppose that the additional clause means that if *actually* cursed it will be devoted to burning. But being **nigh unto a curse** denotes that the judgment impends.⁵ It also denotes, however, that *it has not yet fallen*, and thus far it is not certain that burning is the end of that land, or, properly, that destruction is the end of the persons referred to. The judgment

¹ Against von Hof.² Against Stuart.³ Comp. x. 27.⁴ See in Alford.⁵ Comp. ἐγγὺς ἀψανσμοῦ, viii. 13.

is near;¹ it depends upon the time; it depends upon whether God will permit or not permit those concerned to escape. In this contingency the Apostle contemplates only those that by profession were Christians. For Jewish opposers of the promised Christ there was no contingency. Regarding the fact of an "apostasy from the living God"² there was no contingency. But, as we have seen at iii. 13, contingency of being taken or not taken in the judgment that would overtake the apostasy did exist for those the Apostle refers to. For those, too, that had really apostatized there may be still a possibility of return. But it hangs on this: "if God permit" (ver. 3).

We may sum up the doctrine taught in our passage ver. 3-8, thus:

Those enlightened as described vers. 4, 5, may apostatize. Yet, as such, they may be the subject of efforts to renew them to repentance. Thus they must be regarded as persons that may repent.

The condition of apostates may be such that it is impossible to renew them to repentance; *not in itself* as such apostasy, but while in that condition the apostate does what is virtually crucifying the Son of God, and putting Him to an open shame. The impossibility is primarily because they are rejecting the very thing that effects repentance, viz., the Cross of Christ.

But chiefly, the renewing to repentance is a matter that is ultimately subject to God's will. And the times He has set for judgment will show whether or not He will permit it. Let God's destroying judgment come while apostates are doing what now makes their renewal to repentance impossible, then what is now impossible becomes forever impossible.

We see in this only doctrine that is common to all the inspired writers both of the Old and of the New Testament. We find³ no expression here to the effect that the sinners described have reached a state that is essentially reprobate, and inveterate, and hopeless of repentance, independent of circumstance or extended time.⁴ Such a situation might justly be identified with the unpardonable sin, as Delitzsch does identify it. But such a

¹ Comp. v. 12; x. 25.

² iii. 12.

³ With Davidson.

⁴ Against Del.

situation no more admits of being plied with teaching, where it is known, than of being the subject of prayer.¹ We would not, therefore, find the Apostle saying he would under any circumstance press persons of that condition with teaching, as he does propose (ver. 3) to do, if God permit, with the persons that are for the present in the condition he represents. Such a reprobate condition, as many suppose to be described in our passage, would be one concerning which God has made known His will, viz., that there shall be no forgiveness for it. If, then, the Apostle meant to describe such a state of sin, he would not say: "if God permit," seeing it would be a case wherein God's will was clearly revealed that he would not permit. Our passage, therefore, does not describe: "the sin against the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xii. 31, 32).

It obviates all mystification here, if we hold fast to the Apostle's aim in writing. He presents the gospel as salvation from the word spoken by angels, and from its attendant punishment of transgression in which all were in peril of being involved (ii. 3-4). The condition of enlightenment represented in vers. 4, 5, is intelligence of that salvation, with experience that demonstrates the truth of it. The effect of the conviction of the truth of that salvation is to forsake trust in dead works. The renewal to repentance is re-statement in that situation of enlightenment with its attendant conviction of the truth of such salvation. Repentance *in that form* was impossible for those that were virtually crucifying Christ. Let the same persons be brought to look on Christ as the Son of God speaking God's word of salvation to them; that will not be renewal to repentance in the sense of our passage; but it will present the possibility of it. From that they may be brought to see that in Christ's work is their salvation, and not in the practices of Judaism. That would be repentance from dead works.

Our passage represents the possibility of such as are described in vers. 4, 5, falling away and being finally lost. The much debated question is: *do vers. 4, 5, describe regenerate Christians?* Many hold that they do, and some² think this so obvious, that

¹ 1 John v. 16.

² *e. g.*, Del., Alford.

they regard those that affirm the contrary as past reasoning with. For the most part expositors have taken that view or the opposite, according to their dogmatic position.

In answering this question, we may say, first of all, that we see that the Apostle identifies the Christian situation that he describes with that of those in the wilderness, as he does in the representations of iii. 7-19. And further, he seems to identify it with the situation described in Ezek. xviii. 24. Yet whether he does the latter or not, *we* are justified in so identifying it. In the latter case, the righteousness, which, if persevered in, would have been the righteous man's salvation, is made no account of if he turn from his righteousness. He shall perish. In the case in the wilderness, the subjects of divine promises and of miraculous aid, who had also committed themselves to divine guidance and rejoiced in divine favor, actually fell away and were destroyed. Thus we see that our passage presents nothing unique. And it evidently pretends to nothing of the kind. It only represents the dealings of providence in the way that runs all through the sacred writings. The problems presented here are therefore not peculiar. But, in the second place, we may answer the above question by pointing to the Apostle's own decision of it, which is involved in what he pointedly affirms of those who represented this matter in the wilderness. He says of them: "the word of the report did not profit those not being mingled by faith with those that heard," (iv. 2.) Whatever disagreement there may be in explaining this sentence as a whole, there is no disagreement in this, that it affirms that it was want of faith that made the word of promise unprofitable to those referred to. Because they were without faith they sinned, and provoked, and embittered, and were disobedient, and perished. And this want of faith is affirmed of them with relation to their situation of highest privilege, and when their conduct was such that, had they persevered in it, they would have inherited what was promised. It affirms, then, that they might have all that, and be all that, and yet be without faith. And our Author himself says: "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God, (xi. 5.) We conclude then that *they* were not regenerate.

We conclude, also, that neither does the Author mean that the privileged condition he describes vers. 4, 5, and identifies with the situation in the wilderness, should represent a regenerate state. In fact, the present inquiry is out of place with regard to representations in the present epistle. For the point of view from which it is written is, that the the readers are in danger. And the proof of being truly Christian, and so really saved, that the Author demands for the situation, is expressed thus: "We are companions of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end," (iii. 14; comp. iii. 6.) And the same continues as the only criterion that the Author urges to the last, with not a little reiteration. We meet it again in the next breath, vers. 11, 12. It receives an expression fitted to throw light on the above inquiry at x. 35-39, especially in the words: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul." This is a perfectly explicit denial that those that are lost ever had evangelical faith. It is the Apostle that makes it. It must determine his meaning in our passage, and is conclusive, that by the terms of vers. 4, 5, he does not mean to describe those "that have faith unto the saving of the soul." Whether they have that faith or not, in addition to what they are there described to have experienced, can appear only in the event, according as they hold fast as they have begun (iii. 14), or cast away their boldness (x. 35). Our epistle does not represent the doctrine of regeneration, and therefore has no expression of the relation of faith and regeneration.¹ This, of course, must not be taken advantage of one way or other. But it is taking no advantage of this silence to draw from the teaching of the New Testament scriptures that *does* define the relation of faith and regeneration. That teaching is positive enough, that when there is no faith that is unto salvation there has been no regeneration.²

The Apostle now turns to his readers, and expressly intimates that in them he has in mind another sort of persons than those referred to vers. 3-8.

Ver. 9. But we are persuaded concerning you, beloved, the

¹ Comp. Riehm, p. 710.

² Comp. below, on ver. 10.

better things, and that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

The Apostle does not elsewhere in our epistle address his readers by the term **beloved**. This makes the present use of the designation the more remarkable. It is prompted, we may suppose, by the seriousness of the foregoing representations. He turns from the repulsive picture he has been constrained to portray, and relieves his feelings and those of his readers by this endearing term. By this, and by what he expressly affirms of those here addressed in the second person, it is evident that they are distinguished from those just described in the third person. Of those now addressed, he says, he is **persuaded the better things** (τὰ χρείστονα), meaning that he has a strong conviction that **the better things** appertain to them. We translate: **the better things**, because of the article which points more than a mere comparison with the evil things just described. The Apostle does not mean merely something better than the case of the persons described, vers. 4-8, but something definite that is the special antithesis of that, and thus, in an exclusive way, better. We have noted at i. 4 how the word *better* touches a key note of this epistle, and for the reasons given there, think that here also the expression: **the better things**, especially as emphasized by the article, refers to those important things wherein the betterness of the Christian revelation appears in comparison with the Old Testament covenant ministered by angels. It confirms this view when **the better things** are further defined as **the things that accompany salvation**. For we have seen, at ii. 3, that **salvation** is contemplated by the Author especially in the light of deliverance from the consequences of the word spoken by angels, and even from subjection to that word itself. These better things are the particular antithesis of the bad things represented vers. 3-8 concerning those whose apostasy was precisely a return to dead works. The Apostle gives us the ground of the conviction:

Ver. 10. For God is not unjust to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered to the saints and still minister.

By this the Apostle expresses that his conviction regarding

his readers is founded on what he believes must be the attitude of God toward them. In this, his sentiment is the correlative of what he has shown it to be regarding the opposite sort of persons, of whom and whose case he judged in the light of what God might permit (ver. 3). In this case he bases his inference on the justice of God; **for God is not unjust**, he says, intimating that what is expressed in the following words would be unjust. And obviously, underlying the representations of vers. 4-8, related as they are to the expression "if God permit" (ver. 3), there is a similar inference from the justice of God. In both the severity and the goodness thus inferred from the justice of God, the Apostle furnishes us an impressive example of how we ought to do the same with God's justice.

This conviction (viz., that the "better things and that accompany salvation" are for his readers) being founded on God and His attitude toward them, shows that what the Apostle intends by: "the better things" cannot, by any means, be something subjective in the hearers themselves.¹ They are what may be expected from the justice of God, and therefore better things of His dispensation. Better things, as regards conduct, would not be a matter of conviction to express by *πεπιστευθα*, especially in the same breath that refers to such conduct as a matter of observation and well known. Such reference the Apostle makes, and thus expresses the second premise of his conclusion. The readers **had ministered to the saints and still ministered**. It is impossible to determine geographically who **the saints** were that are here referred to, and equally impossible to say precisely what was the ministry. The similar reference x. 32-34 represents a situation and experience that were common to many times and places in the first age of the church. Our verse, therefore, throws no light on the question: to whom was the epistle addressed?² We may only confidently infer, that these ministrations were to those suffering loss and persecution for Christ's sake. Such as the ministry was, the Apostle declares that it was **work and love showed to the name of God**. In that quality it warranted an inference from the justice of God. **God would not forget this**. It would be

¹ Against Lün., Alford, etc.

² See Del.

such forgetting, did God not extend to them "the better things and that pertain to salvation": such is the direct implication of the Apostle's words. And this that he expresses is virtually the antithesis of the: "if God permit" of ver. 3, and is the Author's warrant that God *does permit* what he proposes *for his readers* ver. 1. Moreover, we may reflect, that the expression before us, vers. 9, 10, plainly intimates, and very nearly expresses, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in the same form as the Apostle does in Phil. i. 6, 7. "Being confident (πεποιθώς) of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ; even as it is right (δίκαιον) for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all." And the resemblance would be still closer were we to read on: "Because [ye have me in your heart],¹ inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence of the gospel, ye are all partakers with me of grace."

The Apostle's confidence concerning his readers is not based on the present evidences of their lives, as v. 11-14 shows. But spite of that declension, and on the ground of convincing evidences that appeared when they were first enlightened (x. 32), he is confident that God will dispense to them the things that belong to salvation. But His expression of confidence stops short of the expression Phil. i. 6, 7, in that it does not anticipate the "perfecting." But this may be only because the situation, so different from that of the Philippians, calls for earnest admonition to persevere, and thus excludes that expression as unbefitting the present task. With the confidence, as far as expressed, the present duty is to incite the readers to diligence and patience in faith to the end. With this thought the Apostle proceeds:

Ver. 11. But we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence with regard to the full assurance of the hope until the end.

The Apostle would have them show the same diligence in another matter that they had shown and were showing in ministering to the saints. And the discipline he proposes for their "pressing on to full-growth" itself requires that diligence.

¹ Rosenm, Conyebear, Revision 1881, margin.

This reference to their first diligence repeats in another form the notion: "holding fast the beginning of our boldness and the glorying of our hope, firm until the end." (iii. 6-14.) The Apostle's care extends to **each one**, great and small, and overlooks no one.¹ It is interesting to notice how, in 2 Cor. viii. 6, 7 the present exhortation appears in a reversed order, and "the abounding in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness" (πάσῃ σπουδῇ) is made the measure of that grace the Apostle would have the Corinthian church show in liberally ministering to the saints.

The matter in reference to which the Apostle would have his readers show this diligence is: **the full assurance of the hope until the end.** The hope means the same that is meant iii. 6, which definiteness is expressed by the article (the article having here the force of the personal pronoun)² and may be rendered: **your hope.**³ It means the substance hoped for, and not the subjective act of hoping. **The full assurance** or entire certainty regarding that matter of hope is the subjective thing to which their diligence should be directed. They ought to reach that certainty and abide in it **until the end**, by which, as at iii. 6, 14, is meant, till the goal is reached where there is no longer need for such exercise, *i. e.*, when the thing hoped for becomes a thing seen.

The notion so expressed is doubly amplified, first negatively, then positively.

Ver. 12. **In order that ye become not dull, but imitators of them who by faith and endurance inherit the promises.**

The Apostle says, v. 11, that they have got dull of hearing; not meaning there, however, that their dullness was only in respect of hearing, but that, being dull, they were so of hearing as well as in other respects. Speaking now again of their **becoming dull**, is no discrepancy with that, that calls on us to suppose he means here dullness in another particular, *e. g.*, in respect to holding fast to the Christian hope, or in Christian practice.⁴ Dullness, sluggishness, is something that goes on, and its exhibition at one date and another is treated as genetic, just as is

¹ Chrys.

³ So Alford.

² Kühner, Gram. II. 482.

⁴ Against Lün., Alford.

done also with the reverse of it, viz., the imitation of the good. Such **imitators** the Apostle would have his readers **become**.

The thing to be imitated is plain: viz., **faith and endurance**, both which notions, as thus correlated, call for amplification, or rather illustrations. But as the Apostle gives this in chap. xi. we need not anticipate the consideration of them here. The persons appealed to as examples of the faith and patience are, as a fact of exposition, not so easily identified. **Those inheriting the promises** (τῶν κληρονομούντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας) they are called. The present participle forbids our supposing¹ that the Patriarchs are meant. On the other hand, the mention of Abraham (ver. 13), which is obviously an appeal to one example of the persons to be imitated,² forbids our supposing³ that only the contemporaries of the Apostle and his readers are meant. We must then understand the expression in a perfectly general way,⁴ without respect to time, of those that so inherit promises.

But for perfect clearness, two other matters require definition: (a) what is meant by **the promises**, in the plural; (b) and what is meant by **inheriting** the promises. By defining the latter the former will become plain.

The need of defining (b) what the Author means by **inheriting the promises**, arises from his using other phrases which, with our present one, are confounded by readers as if they were synonymous, yet which, as they are used, have the appearance of contradictions.⁵ Let us notice, then, that (under the verbal form or substantively, κληρονομεῖν,⁶ συνηρονομεῖν,⁷ κληρονομία,⁸) the Author expresses a relation that is actual, and, so far as it involves possession, is actual possession of something received. In this sense Abraham is said to receive a promise, and so to be one inheriting a promise.⁹ In the same sense this has been¹⁰ and now again is, in our verse, predicated of many in a general way, including contemporaries of the Apostle. But again, the Author says of the Patriarchs and of all the other examples of faith, preceding the revelation of Christ, whom he appeals to in chap. xi. that they

¹ As De Wette.² Against von Hof.³ As von Hof.⁴ As Lün., Alford, etc.⁵ See in Bleek the meanings discussed.⁶ i. 14; vi., 12; xii. 17.⁷ xi. 9.⁸ vi. 17; xi. 7.⁹ xi. 19.¹⁰ i. 14.

“did not receive” (κομιζω in the Mid.)¹ the promises which they are said to have inherited. And also of his readers he mentions “the promise” as something yet to be received by them.² By (κομιζέσθαι), “receiving,” then, the Author means that possession that has and bears off in actual enjoyment the substance of what is hoped for. That receiving, however, has not come to those that are as yet only heirs of the promises. On the other hand, the Author says of Abraham: “he obtained the promise,” ver. 15. And similarly he affirms, in general, of those examples of faith appealed to in chap. xi., that “they obtained promises.”³ By this is meant that, personally and directly, God made a promise to them, which was then their promise. These different notions, variously expressed, must, therefore, be kept quite distinct, and thereby we will avoid much confusion.

Chief among the notions thus distinguished is that expressed by our phrase, **inheriting the promises**. By this is denoted a relation of right and title to the things promised, without actual possession and enjoyment.⁴ Such is the relation to the promises of those that must show faith and endurance with reference to them.

In regard to (a,) (i. e., the first of the inquiries named above) **the promises**, in the plural, we are not to suppose that the Author means by them the same thing that he means by “the promise”⁵ in the singular. We have noticed that in xi. 33, he mentions the examples of faith as having “obtained promises,” just as, ver. 15, he says Abraham obtained “the promise.” As he refers to **those inheriting the promises** in a general way, so he includes the various promises obtained as the object of their enduring faith. Abraham obtained “a promise;” Moses another, viz., of entering God’s rest; David another;⁶ and Christians have many exceeding great and precious promises.⁷ To the promises so given, those that obtain them stand related as heirs, having a right and title to them, which they show by **faith and endurance**.

The Apostle adduces Abraham as an example of those **inheriting the promises**.

¹ xi. 13, 39.² x. 36.³ xi. 33.⁴ Comp. Gal. iv. 1-2.⁵ Ver. 17; x. 36.⁶ 2 Sam. vii. 4 sqq.⁷ 2 Pet. i. 4.

Ver. 13. For God having made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, 14. saying: Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15. And thus having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

The relation of the participle aorist ἐπαγγελάμενος and the following ὤμοσεν expresses that, in regard to time, the promising antedated the swearing;¹ just as in the precisely similar construction of ver. 15, the "patient endurance" antedated the "obtaining the promise." The reference is to the promises, *i. e.*, the same for substance repeated, that God had already imparted to Abraham, Gen xii. 7; xvii. 5, 6; xviii. 18, and which God then, Gen. xxii. 16-18, repeated to him and confirmed by an oath.² From first to last of these transactions embraced a considerable period. Since Isaac's birth, for instance, twenty-five years had elapsed³ before the occasion when God confirmed the foregoing promise by His oath. It is to Abraham's conduct during this period that the Apostle appeals as an example of faith and patience. It was precisely the critical and determining period of his life, from which his life received its character of faith, and in which he won the title of "father of all them that believe."⁴ Comprehending all this, the Apostle says: **and thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.** The: **and thus** (x. οὕτως) belongs to: **he obtained**,⁵ and not to: **having endured**.⁶ By the **promise** is meant what was previously a matter of promise, as expressed by the participle: **having promised**. It is this definite thing that is expressed by the article. By: **so he obtained** is meant, that then Abraham came to possess the thing as a promise so as to make it his in a manner that previously it was not by the foregoing promising. If it be objected that with this meaning, **obtaining the promise**, as related to **having promised**, expresses no progress of thought,⁷ we may reply, that the same objection might as justly be made to the successive transactions themselves. That God should promise, and then confirm the same promise by an oath, as signalizing and reward-

¹ So de Wette, Lün., von. Hof.² Lün.³ Josephus, Antiq., I. 3, § 2.⁴ Rom. iv. 11.⁵ Lün., Alford.⁶ von Hof.⁷ So Lün.

ing the faith Abraham showed in offering up Isaac, is proof that, on God's part, the latter transaction added to those that preceded. Moreover, giving in that way the promise that had before been promised, was the final act that made Abraham forever and unalterably the heir of the promise. And it became the event to which the posterity of Abraham constantly appealed, and also God himself, as their title to be heirs of the same promise.¹

The Apostle has incited his readers by motives drawn from the examples of faith and patience, thus drawing them from before. He proceeds to add another consideration, pressing them by urgency from behind.

Ver. 16. **For men, indeed, swear by the greater ; and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation.**

The progress of thought, we observe here, justifies the retention of *μὲν*, against the editors L. Tr., Tisch., viii., W. and H., and the Revision of 1881, who drop it; and with Recept. Tisch. vii., Del ; Alford, von Hof, de Wette (?) who retain it.

The Apostle appeals to what is practised among men,² and thus introduces the following consideration, by an *argumentum ad hominem*. That men make oath, and what is the force of the oath so sworn (such is the force of the article), is the matter presented in this verse. The expression : **by the greater** only completes the description of the oath as made by men, without emphasising the antithesis to the way in which God swore, as is commonly thought.³ The special point is, that **the oath is final**, and **confirms**, or makes steadfast, that about which it is made. This prepares the way for the important statement that follows.

Ver. 17. **Wherein God, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His will, interposed with an oath ; 18. in order that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong exhortation, who are fleeing, to lay hold of the hope set before us.**

Understanding that the Apostle is adding something different from what he presents, vers. 12–15, we find no occasion for supposing that God's oath and the promise mentioned here refer

¹ Gen. xxvi. 3; iv. 24; Exod. xiii. 5, etc. ² Comp. ix. 16, 17. ³ Comp. Del.

to the things similarly named, vers. 13–15. Our verses have been commonly so understood by expositors. But it is far from plain what connection there is between the promises given to Abraham, mentioned in verse 15, and the promise that sets before the Apostle and his readers a hope that enters within the vail (ver. 19). **The promise** of our verse 17 is something the readers have “received,” and of which they may become the heirs, if only they have faith and patience. It sets before them a hope, *i. e.*, thing hoped for,¹ which is **the hope** (ver. 18). It is evident that the Apostle, in the statement of our verses, has reverted completely to the situation of himself and his readers. This relieves us from being constrained to find in the ἐν ᾧ nothing more than a “wherefore.”² It means **wherein**, = “in that wherein;”³ and the relative refers to all that constituted the subject at verses 11, 12, where “promise” and “inherit” express it, and which is now resumed in the expression, **heirs of the promise**. And βουλόμενος, βουλῆς make a paranomasia⁴ that has the effect of expressing a determinate purpose; and so it is intended that the foregoing translation shall be understood, the “willing—his will,” being used only to reproduce the paranomasia of the original. The meaning is: God intended to show that his counsel was immutable.

These considerations require us to identify in the things mentioned, viz., **the promise, the oath, and the hope**, subjects that the Apostle presents as belonging to that situation. These we must not find⁵ in what is mentioned below, vii. 20–22, as confirmed by oath, seeing *that* could not be understood by the readers to be referred to before it was mentioned. We must look back for these subjects. We find them all in iv. 1–3; and, taking the whole context, iii. 9—iv. 13, they have been given that prominence and importance that justifies the Author in expecting his present language to recall them. This connection, then, ought to have received more than the slight notice taken of it by expositors.⁶

The promise now mentioned (ver. 17) is the promise of entering

¹ See on ver. 11.

³ Comp. ii. 18; Winer, Gram., p. 337.

⁵ As von Hof., Angus.

² As *e. g.*, Bleek, Alford.

⁴ Comp. Bleek.

⁶ See Stuart, Lindsay.

into God's rest. **The heirs of the promise** are those that have obtained that promise, comprehending, as in iv. 1, 2, those of the past as well as the present. That, too, was a promise given long ago, and then¹ made the subject of an oath. *It was not, indeed, an oath confirming the promise.* And it is to be noted, that our verse 17 does not say that such was the purpose of God's oath; nor does a single word in the context express, by its own power, "the depth of God's condescension in the act,"² or grace or condescension at all, except ἐμεισίτευσεν. It was to **demonstrate** (ἐπιδείξει) **His will** that God swear; especially the **unalterableness** of it. And βουλή is not used in the New Testament to express the purpose of God when it proposes gracious things,³ but where it concerns the manifestation of severity,⁴ or, more commonly, without implying either grace or severity, but simply that Sovereign will, and not chance or the mere will of men, ruled in what took place.⁵ And when "God swear if they shall enter into My rest," He did most **abundantly demonstrate the immutability of His will** in reference to **the promise** that the Apostle has written up in capitals as that under which the people of God now live, of which he has said, "Let us give diligence to enter into that rest."⁶ And this **demonstration** was **to the heirs of the promise**, as well as to others, as the Apostle has shown by his ample use of it (iii. 7—iv. 13) for *exhortation*.⁷ God, says the Apostle expressively, **interposed with an oath**, by which **interposed** he may mean to intimate the friendliness⁸ of this otherwise severe purpose; for, as it concerned those that fell in the wilderness, it was severity, but towards the heirs of the promise, it was goodness,⁹ viz., the goodness of faithful warning and exhortation. Accordingly, the Apostle adds: **in order that we may have a strong exhortation**, etc. (ver. 18). For **exhortation**, or "incitement," is the meaning of παράκλησις here, as it is in the other instance of using the same word in our epistle,¹⁰ as, also, the constant meaning of the equally recurring verbal form παρακαλεῖν, is "to exhort."¹¹

¹ Num. xiv. 22 sqq.² Del.³ Against Del.⁴ Luke vii. 30, which is Del. ref (!)⁵ Acts ii. 23; iv. 28, etc.⁶ iv. 11. ⁷ παρακαλεῖτε κ. τ. λ. iii. 13. ⁸ See in Passow Lex. s. v. μιστεύω.⁹ Com. Rom. xi. 22. ¹⁰ xii. 5; xiii. 23. ¹¹ ii. 13; x. 25; xiii. 19, 22.

Two immutable things contribute to make the exhortation **strong** ; the Apostle means *the promise* to those “that believe,”¹ and *the oath of exclusion* to the “faithless.”² These are two things **in which it is impossible for God to lie**. The unalterable purpose of God in both respects must operate as a weighty incentive to those who would inherit the promise.

Those that feel the cogency of the exhortation,—viz., himself and his readers,—the Apostle describes as those **who flee for refuge** ; for such is the exact meaning of the present participle οἱ καταφυγόντες. He thus represents them as actually fleeing, but not yet in the refuge. He has already (ii. 1–3) represented “giving heed to” the word of Christ, as “escaping.” (πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευζόμεθα). He now consistently represents faith and endurance, with reference to the promise, as fleeing for refuge.³ We flee for refuge ; we are not in the refuge ; for that is the substance of the promise, viz., “rest,” and the thing hoped for. The exhortation is **to lay hold of the hope set before us**. For παράλ.⁴ and not καταφυγ.⁵ is to be connected with κρατῆσαι κ. τ. λ. as the sense just given of present the expressions demands. And here, by προκειμένες, denoting something out of, and before ourselves, it is made expressly clear that ἐλπίς does not mean hoping, but the substance hoped for. Our refuge is not in laying hold on the hope, but in the hoped-for thing itself, on which, having escaped and while fleeing, we lay hold by faith that we may come to its refuge. This thought the Apostle proceeds to express.

Ver. 19. **Which we have as an anchor of the soul** [a hope] **both sure and steadfast and entering into the part within the veil**.

The Revision of 1881 connects all the adjective expressions (ἀσφαλῆ—βεβαίαν—εἰσερχομένην) with ἦν referring to ἐλπίς, which seems to be the correct rendering. The difficulty of fitting the figure of the **anchor** through all these expressions requires this rendering. On account of this difficulty some⁶ connect only ἀσφαλῆ and βεβαίαν with ἄγκυραν, and εἰσερχομ. with ἦν. But if

¹ iv. 3.² iii. 11, 12.³ Comp. in Bleek, Del.⁴ Lün., von Hof., Stuart, etc.⁵ de Wette, Del., Alford.⁶ Lün., quotes Bleek, Bloomfield.

the first two connect with **anchor**, then all must do so,¹ for the $\tau\epsilon-\kappa\alpha\iota-\kappa\alpha\iota$ bind all of them in the same construction. The figure of the anchor is classical, but, excepting the present instance, nowhere used in scripture. The anchor is the dependence of the sailor on the precarious sea, to keep him from drifting to destruction on a lee-shore. It is a misunderstanding of the figure to suppose² that the anchor involves the notion of the harbor. When in the harbor, the harbor itself is the ship's safety; and is still more the security of the disembarked voyagers. It is equally gratuitous to suppose³ that the figure of the anchor brings along with it the bottom of the sea on which *the anchor* lays hold, when the seamen cast anchor. The **anchor** is the sailor's indispensable furniture; he takes it wherever he sails; he holds on to it, not only when it is cast into the deep, but also while it is stowed in the ship. For it is his safety. Similarly "the hope set before us," on which we have laid hold, **is an anchor of the soul**. And that, we suppose, exhausts the figure. Thus what follows is not an amplification of the figure, but is meant to particularize things about this hope that bring it, as a topic of discourse, into relation with Jesus as our High Priest. It is **sure**, *i. e.*, a matter of certainty, being certainly there where we hope to find it.⁴ It is **steadfast**, therefore it will continue to be what and where it is. As for where it is, instead of saying, in the common form, that it is laid up in heaven,⁵ the Apostle describes it as **entering into the part within the veil**. Not that he means a different notion; but, as already said, he thus sets the hope in that relation wherein he means to speak of Christ, and show that this hope is what Christ makes it by the ministry he discharges there. He says: **entering**, when we might expect him to say only that it *is* there. This may be owing to the fact that the Holiest was habitually referred to as a place where the high priest "entered," not where he *was*,⁶ and because the hope follows Jesus.

¹ Lün., Alford, von Hof., etc.

² Comp. common Christian language in hymns, etc.

³ As Ebrard.

⁴ Comp ἀσφαλεία, Acts v. 23.

⁵ Col. i. 5.

⁶ See in Del.

Ver. 20. **Whither Jesus entered a forerunner for us, having become a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**

We observe that, by **forerunner**, the Apostle still maintains the image of fleeing for refuge (ver. 18); which, we may note, is one more reason for assuming that he does not extend the figure of the anchor through ver. 19. Those fleeing for refuge send a forerunner in advance to provide for their reception. For a forerunner means that others are coming on after him. When those coming after have also entered in where the forerunner has entered, then they will be in the refuge to which they flee. Such a forerunner is Jesus; not, however, by our sending, but by His own going.¹ He **entered** to the part within the vail for us, *i. e.*, on our behalf, or as the high priest entered the Holiest on behalf of the people. This Jesus did as High Priest. For such He had **become**, and as such He was saluted when He ascended to God, as the Apostle affirms v. 10. The aorist participle (γενόμενος) as related to the finite verb in the aorist² denotes that what He became preceded His act of entering within the vail.

Thus the Apostle is once more back to his subject (v. 10) after a long digression (v. 10—vi. 20). But, as at v. 10 we found this theme enlarged beyond its presentation at iii. 14, from: “a great High Priest,” to: “High Priest after the order of Melchizedek,” so here we have it enlarged further by the addition of the predicate **forever**, which in the sequel appears very important. The present statement of the theme, by putting *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ* emphatically to the front, prepares the reader for the discourse that is immediately to follow.

Before taking hold of that, let us review the discourse that leads up to it.

At v. 10 the Apostle presents the theme of Christ a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, received into the heavens and there greeted by God with this title. To this he now adds the further predicate **forever**. He has derived this title from Ps. cx. 4. He has expressly said (v. 11) that he has much to say about it; and now it appears that it is his purpose to communicate something of that “much discourse.” He complains

¹ John xiv. 2.

² Comp. v. 1, 9.

(v. 11, 12) of the dullness of his readers as rendering his task difficult, intimating in particular that their dullness makes them ignorant of the import of "the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God." He means this in general, but, of course, has particularly in mind their ignorance of these things as they relate to what he now desires to impart. He thus intimates, that a knowledge of elementary things of the Old Testament is essential to the comprehension of what he would impart; knowledge not merely of the facts; that the readers had; but knowledge of their significance and import. He adduces a considerable amount of these elementary things in the following discourse vii. 1—x. 18; and does it in accordance with what he says v. 12: "Ye have need that one teach you again what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God." And first he begins with what pertains to Melchizedek.

A survey of the history of the exposition of vii. 1-25,¹ must convince one that the Apostle's reproaches, v. 11, 12, are deserved by more than the original readers of our epistle. It affords, also, ample illustration that his theme is "difficult of interpretation." Though he himself undertakes to teach the elements relating to his present theme with the simplicity of a master, many have confounded this simplicity by bringing to the consideration of what he says much knowledge, and more imagination, that have no relation to the subject.

VII. 1. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God most high, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, 2. to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all, first indeed being interpreted King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace, 3. without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like to the Son of God, remaineth a priest forever.

The verses before us constitute one long sentence, in which the Apostle adduces several items drawn exclusively from the scriptural account of Melchizedek found Ps. cx. 4, and Gen. xiv. 18-20, which for him and his readers are the only sources of

¹ See in Alford.

information about Melchizedek. It is common to represent¹ that some of these items (as far as **Abraham**) are expressed appositionally to Melchizedek: that the rest are predicative, and belong to the predicate of the direct verb: **remains a priest forever**; and that these latter, all of them, enumerate qualities with which, *and according to which*, Melchizedek remains a priest forever. To this we must object, that, first it gives no proper force to *γάρ* = **for**, which obviously connects with the statement of vi. 20 that Jesus is High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. It makes *γάρ* explanatory = **that is**,² and correctly. But the interpretation issues in making it argumentative, by taking the predicative terms: **without father . . . nor end of life** as the ground for affirming that Melchizedek remains a priest forever. It is argumentative to say: Jesus is High Priest forever, for Melchizedek, owing to his being without genealogy, and having neither beginning of days nor end of life, remains a priest forever. Again, were it true that the predicates in question proved Melchizedek to be one who remains forever, it could only have force, as related to *Jesus* remaining a priest forever, if Melchizedek's remaining such forever be considered as included in the sum of the notions, or as being itself the sum of the notion expressed by: **the order of Melchizedek**, after which Jesus is said to be priest. But as a fact, *the order itself*, and *the perpetuity of the priest* are distinct notions. This appears from the way in which they are brought in, as noted above on vi. 20, and also from the subsequent discourse, vers. 4 sqq., where first the former (ver. 6) and then the latter (ver. 8), is emphasized; and this with reiteration (vers. 11-14 and vers. 15, 16). Again, while there is nothing in the clauses **King of Salem . . . without genealogy** to denote that they are not one and all introduced in the same way and with the same intent, it is, on the other hand, far from plain that the predicates: **without father . . . nor end of life** have any logical relation like a premise for the inference **remains a priest forever**.

For these reasons, and many difficulties that are the offsprings of the construction we reject, we must choose another.

¹ Comp. Del., von Hof., Ebrard, Lindsay, Davidson, etc.

² Ebrard.

It is remarkable that the Apostle, in vers. 4-25, does not once draw a comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus, as he does when arguing from the high priest, *e.g.*, with a *οὐτως καὶ ὁ ζῶντων*; ¹ but he states everything as of Melchizedek himself. It is natural to suppose that he means the reader himself to make the inference of the correlative truth regarding Christ; and such is, accordingly, the common way of interpreting all that is said of Melchizedek. But we are led to suppose the Apostle would be differently understood: first, from the difference of manner just remarked on; again from the obvious fact that the Apostle's chief purpose is to affirm certain things of Christ, and all their force as affirmed is only important as true of him; and again, because, while all that is affirmed is perfectly reasonable when said of Christ, some of the things, and particularly the **abiding forever**, are quite incomprehensible when said of Melchizedek. On this account we understand, that the Apostle, having expressed his theme: "Jesus become a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (vi. 20), proceeds to speak of this person mentioned in Ps. cx. 4, as he is there represented, Jesus Melchizedek,² without distinguishing between the two historical persons involved. What may be said of one he says of either, meaning however to represent in particular what is true of Jesus as so named in the Ps. cx.³ He may the more readily write thus, in contrast with the formal parallels he expressly draws when he appeals to the Levitical priests and high priest and the tabernacle and its furniture, etc., because his Psalm text so unqualifiedly declares the Melchizedek character of the Messiah. This makes it needless for him first to point the parallel.

The subject, then, before the Apostle in our chap. vii. is not the Melchizedek of Gen. xiv., but the Melchizedek of Ps. cx., and named vi. 20. Our vers. 1-3 are connected with that by **For**, which introduces expressions explanatory of the subject: "Jesus become a high priest after the order of Melchizedek."

¹ v. 5; ix. 28; comp. viii. 3.

² Comp. J. Cappellus.

³ As resembling this manner of blending predicates of different subjects without express comparison, comp. Eph. v. 23-33; Gal. iv. 22-31; 1 Cor. x. 1-4.

This Melchizedek (οὗτος ὁ Μελχ.), says the Apostle, as naming the subject just described ; just as the Apostle Peter,¹ after describing David's prophetic description of Christ's resurrection says : "this Jesus (τοῦτον τ. Ἰησοῦν), as naming the subject so described by David. To this subject he adds a number of terms appositionally, viz., all from **King of Salem** to **without genealogy**. They are all drawn from the record Gen. xiv. 18-20, and are descriptive of the subject, reproducing the traits of the character or person which the Psalmist, or rather God by the Psalmist,² has devoted to such significant use. This person, says the Apostle, **having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like to the Son of God, remains a priest forever** ; and excepting the first clause, the foundation of *this* statement is Ps. xc. 4. All this representation (vers. 1-3) is made, not in proof of anything, but, as said above, to present "the elements of the oracles of God" that are needed for the proof the Apostle means to give in the sequel. Yet these elements are so enumerated as to present at once the distinctive order of the priesthood, especially as contrasted with the Levitical.

Psalm cx. takes Melchizedek to represent the nature of the promised Messiah, viz., that he is a priest of a unique order ; and the Psalm declares, as speaking for Jehovah, that he is such a priest forever. In enumerating the traits that must accordingly be imputed to Christ, the Apostle draws from the only extant account of the historical Melchizedek, for the Psalmist as well as for others. In doing this, he does not mention everything, as *e. g.*, he makes no reference to Melchizedek's bringing forth bread and wine. It is evident from the sequel, vers. 4 sqq., that it is his aim to adduce such traits as mark the greatness of the character ascribed to Christ, and that make his priesthood unique. This Melchizedek was King of Salem ; was a priest of God most high. These are the chief heads which he further defines *seriatim* immediately after. He met Abraham at the crisis of his greatest worldly eminence,³ when returning with the glory of victory. On the one hand Melchizedek blessed him ; on the other he paid tithes to Melchizedek. This is the Melchizedekian

¹ Acts ii. 32.² Comp. v. 6.³ Comp. Del.

action that illustrates what the order does. Then the significance of Melchizedek's name and of his royal title is noted. The former means **King of righteousness**; the latter is **King of peace**. As the Apostle himself thus notes the significance he attaches to the title **King of Salem**, it is of no importance to consider whether as is indeed abundantly evident,¹ he understood by Salem Jerusalem, or some other place. Following these items, the Apostle mentions others that mark the unique character of the priesthood ascribed to Christ. The Psalmist, describing that priesthood by the name Melchizedek, signifies that it would not be essential to it that he was **without father, without mother, without genealogy**, because Melchizedek appears without any mention of these. What is meant by this becomes plain when, vers. 6, 13, 14, the Apostle points the contrast with the Levitical priesthood. The scripture calls Melchizedek: **priest of God most high**, yet mentions no father, no mother, no genealogy that explain or intimate his title to be a priest, titles so important to the notion of a legitimate priesthood according to the law of Moses. The significance of what is thus predicated of Melchizedek is wholly in reference to the fact that he, or rather the Melchizedek Messiah, is called a priest. For it is common enough for the Old Testament, as well as the New, to mention important persons without making allusion to their parents or descent. It is, moreover, worthy of note in passing, that the Apostle's way of reasoning here from the silence of scripture is something totally different from that practised by the so-called higher criticism. Did he mean to affirm, as indeed some² have absurdly supposed he does, that Melchizedek had no parents, and that he was more than a mere man, and did he base that affirmation on the fact that scripture mentions no parents of his, that would, indeed, be arguing from the silence of scripture in the fashion so fondly indulged by the higher criticism. It would be, likewise, such a violent use of scripture, we think, did the Apostle, on the ground of such silence, inculcate³ the notion that Melchizedek was a person differing from common men and having a great and mysterious

¹ Comp. Del., Alford.

² Bleek; and Orig., Epiphani., etc., see in Pool. Synop.

³ As Alford.

eminence. If one may reason so of him, it does not appear why one may not reason in a similar manner of others that are introduced into sacred history in the same way, *e. g.*, Elijah.

The Apostle adds two more predicates, which, like the three just named, are significant with reference to the priesthood described; viz., that it lacked something deemed very important to priesthood under the law of Moses: **having neither beginning of days nor end of life.** "It must be noted that the Apostle does not say: 'neither beginning of life nor end,' but: **neither beginning of days**, inasmuch as ἀρχὴ ἡμερῶν can, in the case of an incumbent of an office, be the beginning of his term of office (comp. Matt. ii. 1). Whereas those, that otherwise in redemptive history held the priesthood, entered on the office at a certain period to continue in it till death. Melchizedek is the priest he is in the sacred history in such a fashion that nothing is said of his entrance on office nor of the end of his life."¹ We are unable to see a deeper reference² in the present expressions. But these notions being expressed participially (ἔχων) without the article, may belong to the predicate; not so directly as the following clause, owing to their negative character; and perhaps they need not be drawn to the predicate at all.

The Apostle adds: **but having been made like to the Son of God.** Conjoined with the foregoing by δέ = **but** = "but rather,"³ the present expression is the positive contrary of the preceding negatives that point to the Levitical ordinances which give those negatives their significance. The readers would, of their own suggestion, notice that: **without father . . . having neither beginning of days nor end of life**, describes a priesthood unlike the Levitical. The actual likeness the Apostle expresses: it was to the Son of God. He says **having been made like**, and by this he appeals to the authority of Ps. cx.⁴ and means that God was the maker of this likeness.⁵ At v. 6 the Apostle has first used this text, and there he represents God as the agent of what is expressed by it, and as doing what is so expressed, by and at the time of, the declaration of the Psalm. Nothing has intervened

¹ von Hof.² Against Del., Alford.³ Comp. vi. 12.⁴ With Ebrard; against Del., Alford, etc.⁵ See in Del.

to change the thought there expressed. The word ἀφωμοιωμένος does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament nor in the LXX.; but it is classical.¹ It is, however, used in the "Epistle of Jeremiah" iv. 62, 70,² and, as there used, means "to become like." And in our text it may mean no more. So that, following the common interpretation, as we have done above, and defining who is to be thought of as the maker of the likeness, may be overloading the expression. Yet "to become" like means *to become indistinguishable from* that to which Melchizedek became like; as the Jews became indistinguishable from the Babylonians when they failed to act as the counsel runs in the "Ep. of Jer.," ver. 4: "Beware that ye in no wise be like the strangers (ἀφωμοιωθήντες τοῖς ἀλλοφύλοις ἀφωμοιωθήτε). By the use made of Melchizedek Ps. cx., that character has become something totally different from what he appears Gen. xiv. This obvious fact is sufficient answer to those³ who object that Ps. cx. makes Christ like Melchizedek, and not the reverse, and who urge, therefore, that it is not there, but in Gen. xiv. that the Apostle finds the evidences of **making like**. Without the authority of Ps. cx. the Apostle had never found this likeness. By naming Jesus in this connection: **the Son of God**, the Apostle does not point a resemblance intimated, as is supposed,⁴ in the expressions **without father . . . nor end of life**, as though these traits were literally realized in the personal attributes of Christ as regards His eternal being. How can likeness be expressed to the term **without father** by calling one a **son**? So naming Jesus has the effect of pointing the contrast between the inferior Levitical priesthood, that is excluded from the likeness here expressed, and Christ, who *is* the subject of the likeness. The Apostle gives the name that he has already exalted at the beginning of the epistle, and connected⁵ with the declaration in the first verse of Ps. cx. as representing its meaning. The expression: **but become like the Son of God**, is, in fact, by the force of the δέ = "but," antithetical of all those that precede. The latter: **King of Salem . . . nor end of life**, sum up the elements of this historical character as found in Gen.

¹ See Alford.² LXX. Ed. Tisch.³ Del.; de Wette.⁴ Calvin, Alford, Lindsay, etc., comp. Del.⁵ i. 13.

xiv. : the present expression interprets the Ps. cx., declaring what that character, with these traits, becomes by the representation of the Psalmist. Thus the clause : **but become like to the Son of God**, prepares the way for the final and crowning predicate : **remains a priest forever**. For¹ these expressions go together. The participle ἀφωμ. without the article, does not belong to the subject, as apposition, but is predicated of the subject, and the participial clause expresses how the thing affirmed in the predicate comes about.² The affirmation itself : **remains a priest forever**, is simply on the authority of Ps. cx., as ver. 8 shows. "There is, indeed, a difference between εἰς τὸ διηνεχές and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Ps. cx. 4) ; but only this, that the latter expresses 'everlasting,' while the former expresses 'steady continuance.'"³—"Melchizedek is not, in himself, the type of Christ, but only by David is he stamped as type of Christ."⁴

What this Melchizedek material becomes by the divine word of the Psalmist is what is before the Apostle, and that is the subject of his direct predicate : **remains a priest forever**. And this result we obtain without supplying a ὅς as some have done.⁵ Jesus said : "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."⁶ And Paul, speaking of husband and wife and of Christ and His church, fails to distribute his predicate, and adds the explanation : "But I speak of Christ and the church."⁷ A similar confusion appears in the Apostle's predicates in our vers. 1-3. But in the crowning predicate he speaks of Christ alone. It is, therefore, an error to suppose that Melchizedek is here said to be a priest forever ; and the efforts to interpret how this may be said⁸ are gratuitous. Had the Apostle said here : High Priest, instead of : **priest**, the interpretation just given would have been plain to every reader. But he says **priest**, though speaking of Christ ; because he is speaking from his Psalm text that says no more ; and because it is *the order of priesthood* that is now noticed. As to order, Aaron was a Levitical priest ; but among

¹ With "Syr.," see in Alford ; and Calvin, Grotius, Ebrard (?) against de Wette, Del., von Hof., Alford, etc.

² Comp. v. 1.

³ von Hof.

⁴ Ebrard.

⁵ e. g., J. Cappellus.

⁶ Matt. xvi. 18.

⁷ Eph. v. 32.

⁸ See in Alford.

Levitical priests he was high priest. So the order of Christ's priesthood is described by Melchizedek; but as for dignity and office he is High Priest. In vers. 16 sqq. Christ is accordingly called simply "a priest." As has been said already, this statement (vers. 1-3) (viz., Christ, as described by Melchizedek, remains priest forever, with the amplification of the epithet Melchizedek) is not presented as proof, but as the elements or premise of proof that is to follow; and it follows immediately. Yet, as has been already noted, these elements, in their very enumeration, are so presented as to set in relief the unique character of the order of Christ's priesthood as contrasted with the Levitical order.

The inferences drawn by the Apostle from the material presented vers. 1-3 extend through vers. 4-25. Understanding the subject of the predicate: "remaineth a priest forever" (ver. 3) to be Christ Himself, as just explained, and not, as is commonly understood, the historical Melchizedek, we are constrained to read the following vers. 4-25, differently from others. We must understand Christ to be spoken of there, and only Christ, where it is common to suppose that Melchizedek is the subject. Jesus, as priest, is the subject; but priest as defined by Melchizedek. The effect of this interpretation is, that, whereas, it is commonly supposed, that things are affirmed of Melchizedek, and *we* must *ourselves* apply them to Christ, it appears that we have them *affirmed directly of Christ*. Beside the reasons that we have found in the interpretation of vers. 1-3, for so understanding the subject, let us recall the observation already made regarding the vers. 4-25, viz., that no οὕτως¹ or other expression is used by the Apostle to point the successive parallels between Melchizedek and Jesus that appear in vers. 4-25. No parallel or comparison whatever is expressed, but facts are predicated of the subject denoted by οὗτος = **this one**, (ver. 4). It is to be noted, moreover, that for this subject we have predicates expressed in the perfect (ὁδεκάτωκε, ἐνλόγηκε, μετέσχηκε). It is not a satisfactory explanation of these perfects to say² that they represent actions whose effects remain, and stand there as done in the scripture; especially when the

¹ Comp. v. 5.² As von Hof, Winer Gram., p. 273.

simultaneous and correlative act of other parties to the transaction is expressed by the aorist (ἐδωκε). These perfects denote a subject that belongs to the present,¹ and the abiding effect of the actions they express, depends upon the present existence of the actor. As we must say: "Columbus *discovered* America," but would say: "Stanley *has discovered* the sources and the course of the Congo." The latter shows that we speak of one that lives, while the former is said of one that has ceased to live. So the Apostle says of Abraham: he **paid tithes**; but says of the subject denoted by οὗτος, **he has taken tithes, he has blessed Abraham**. In instances like the present, "the perfect brings the past into contact with the present"² by the fact of the present existence of the speaker or of the one spoken of, that has acted. Nor can we think³ that this intentional use of the perfects, is "because of the 'enduring nature of' the office and priesthood of Melchizedek;" for, beside finding this notion of Melchizedek incompatible with the sober facts about him, consistency in the discourse would require the other predicate about Melchizedek to be in the perfect. Why should the Apostle not say (vers. 9, 10) Melchizedek "has met him," as well as **has taken tithes of Levi** (instead of δεδεχάτωται—Melchizedek, *i. e.*, οὗτος so interpreted, being the active subject of the passive perfect,—and σὺνῆντησε)? In these verses 9, 10, we think we have a plain intimation of the distinction between the reigning subject (expressed by οὗτος) and Melchizedek. Both in the naming of Melchizedek and in his action expressed by the aorist, in an adverbial clause, marking time, he appears as apart; while οὗτος is the preceding and continues to be the reigning subject, with its actions expressed in the perfect. Furthermore, as will appear below, the representation of ver. 6, that appeals to the fact that the subject expressed by οὗτος is not descended from Levi, has a very natural suggestion when said of Christ, and is naturally reiterated with proof in ver. 13; whereas, when said of Melchizedek it has an appearance of absurdity that is with difficulty set in the light of dignified argument. For the rest, we hope that the following exposition of the Apostle's meaning will have a self-evidential

¹ Comp. Alford.² Kühner, Gram. II. p. 127.³ With Alford.

force that will confirm the correctness of the determining construction of *οὗτος* with which it begins.

Ver. 4. Now consider how great this one [is] to whom also Abraham gave a tenth out of the chief [of the spoils], the Patriarch!

For the reasons with which we have prefaced this section, we take *οὗτος* to mean Jesus, with His priesthood, as defined by Melchizedek, and declared to remain forever. Therefore, we render it simply **This One**, and not "this man;" the latter rendering, being based on the notion that the historical Melchizedek is referred to. Moreover, we must supply *is* and not *was* for the same reason. And grammatically, also, we are constrained to supply *is* to a subject whose predicates are expressed in the perfect. Moreover, it is obviously the Apostle's aim to set forth a present and actual greatness. The greatness has been already expressed by some of the things enumerated as marking the traits of a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, viz., "King," and that indeed "King of righteousness," and "King of peace." But now the Apostle calls attention to the *comparative greatness*. Because, for his purpose, it is expedient to show, that the greatness is superior to that on which Jewishly inclined persons were tempted to build their hopes of salvation. It is difficult to determine the force of the *καί*¹ = **also**. It may relate to *πληξος*, giving it a causal force, and meaning that, because so great, Abraham, "accordingly," paid him tithes.² This has the advantage of taking this and the following *καί* in substantially the same sense. Or it may mean emphasis, belonging to *δεχόμενος*, and expressing that Abraham "went so far as to pay tithes."³ But the emphatic way in which the **Patriarch** is put at the end of the sentence makes it unlikely that an additional notion is emphasized. The Apostle would express the notion of how great by the single fact that Abraham acknowledged it, and to emphasize that, he adds the significant patriarchal title.

Ver. 5. And they, indeed, of the sons of Levi that receive the

¹ Which is rejected by Lach., Treg., and put in the margin by W. and H., but retained by Tisch. viii. Alford, Lün., Del., von Hof.

² von Hof.

³ So Alford; Del., Lün.

priesthood have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though [these have] come out of the loins of Abraham; 6 a but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes from Abraham.

In this the Apostle adduces a second evidence of the greatness proposed for consideration ver. 4. The *καί* continues the "accordingly" expressed by the foregoing *καί*, referring to *πηλίκως* taken causally. He is so great; accordingly Abraham paid tithes to him and he has taken tithes of Abraham, without such warrant as the Levitical priests have used of for taking tithes of their brethren. We understand *ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευεὶ* to be used partitively,¹ just as the foregoing *ἐκ τ. ἀχρωθ*. And the close conjunction of the phrases is one reason for construing them alike. Did the Apostle mean to express the notion of priests "deriving their priesthood by virtue of their being sons of Levi,"² he would not choose a form of expressing it that, like the present, with its proximity to the foregoing identical construction, is exposed, by attraction, to be taken in the same partitive sense.

The matter of construction here becomes important in view of recent critical views of the composition of the Pentateuch, and of the historical genesis of the Levitical priesthood. To those who maintain, that till Ezra there was no distinction between Levites that were not priests and Levites that were, it must be a welcome interpretation of our passage that makes the Apostle mean "priests deriving their title to be priests from their being sons of Levi." On the other hand, it must remain an insurmountable obstacle to the critical view referred to, that the Apostle, whose reference to Jewish institutions is exclusively to them as they stand recorded in the Pentateuch, expressly recognizes a distinction there between Levites in general and Levites that were priests.

The difficulties suggested³ by the fact that it was the Levites and not the priests that took tithes of their brethren, while the tithes of the priests came from their Levitical brethren, need not exact our attention. The priests *were* supported by tithes taken

¹ With Lün., Alford, de Wette; against Del., von Hof.

² So Del., von Hof.

³ Comp. Del.

of the rest of the Israelites ; and we see a sufficient explanation for only the priests being mentioned in the present connection, because it is priests and priesthood and the greatness of Christ's priesthood that are considered.

To point the contrast that exhibits the greatness of **This One** in taking tithes, the Apostle describes Levitical tithing in a manner to expose its inferiority. They **have commandment to tithe the people**, which refers their title to take tithes to a commandment,¹ without which they could no more take tithes than others ; and limits their taking tithes to **the people**. And then they could only lift the tithes **according to law** ; for we connect *κατὰ τ. νόμον* with *ἀποδεχασθῶν*.² By this they were limited to the things specified. Moreover, the *τὸν λαόν* is defined ; they are **their own brethren** ; and this expression is further emphasized by : **though these have come out of the loins of Abraham**. The force of these expressions has been variously interpreted, and indeed in the most opposite ways.³ But the most obvious meaning seems to be, that the Levites took tithes under circumstances that implied no greatness or superiority whatever, inasmuch as those of whom they took tithes were their own brethren, descended, like themselves, from Abraham, which descent was the paramount relationship and matter of consequence, wherein all were equals.⁴

The contrast with the foregoing (ver. 5) that illustrate the greatness of **This One**, now follows (ver. 6 a). The point of the contrast is made by describing this subject as : **he whose genealogy is not counted from them**, viz., the sons of Levi. As it is commonly understood that Melchizedek is the subject here, so it is as commonly accepted without remark, that the Apostle notes the obvious fact that Melchizedek was not descended from Levi in order to point his conclusion. But where, before or since, was there even drawn an inference from the fact that one was not descended from another that lived centuries after his own time ? And how can a notion so preposterous be introduced, as that not being descended from one of Abraham's posterity of the third degree, and much further if we take Aaron, could have any signifi-

¹ Num. xviii. 20-32 ; Deut. xiv. 22-29.

³ See in Del.

² With Alford, Del.

⁴ Comp. Lün.

cance in the transaction of Melchizedek with Abraham himself? Could it be more extraordinary to emphasize the fact, that Abraham was not the offspring of his own great-grandson? Such a reference can only be thought reasonable as a mode of expressing that Melchizedek, who took tithes, was without such a warrant as that of the Levitical priesthood, determined, as the latter was, by genealogical relationship to a tithe-taking tribe. It is, however, incomprehensible, how any author, much more how one so skillful as the Author of our epistle, could adopt so extraordinary a fashion of expressing that idea, or any idea; unless we understand him to intend the sharpest irony. But there can be no suspicion of irony here. *We must understand the Apostle to be speaking of a subject of whom it would be reasonable, and not absurd, to call attention to the fact that he is not descended from Levi.* That subject cannot be Melchizedek. It can only be Jesus Himself. The words under consideration are, therefore, the most convincing evidence of what has already been assumed on other grounds, viz., that by *οὗτος* (ver. 4) the Apostle means Jesus and no other, and that Jesus, and not Melchizedek, is the reigning subject all through our passage (vers. 4–25). Meaning, then, Jesus by **This One**, the Apostle appropriately notes that, without his having any genealogical relation to the tithe-taking Levites, **he has taken tithes from Abraham.**

The most surprising part of this statement, viz., the representation that *Jesus has taken tithes of Abraham*, really belongs to ver. 4, where it has already been made. The point of the present statement is something additional. But we have left the consideration of this extraordinary representation to the present, because only here it comes out in unmistakable light. Now it appears that the Apostle is not stating things that were true of Melchizedek, leaving the reader to infer corresponding consequences with reference to Jesus, as the antitype. He affirms them directly of Jesus Himself. It needs no words to prove that what is affirmed directly of Jesus, and things so strange, much more forcibly set forth his greatness, than when the same are applied by comparison and inference. The difference is as great as between the direct shining of the sun-light and that light

as seen reflected by the moon. The only question is: *can the Apostle so speak of Jesus?* We do not know that the question has ever been considered. The universal understanding that only Melchizedek is meant, when the Apostle says: **This One has taken tithes of Abraham**, seems to express the judgment that it cannot be affirmed of Jesus.

In reply to the question just proposed, we argue first, as above, that we must understand the Apostle to be speaking of some one of whom it is reasonable to notice that he has no relationship of genealogy to the Levites. Then again, as has also been already noticed, the perfect $\delta\epsilon\delta\epsilon\chi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\kappa\epsilon$ = **has taken tithes**, requires a subject that exists. And this reminds us, that, if it is difficult to conceive how Jesus can be spoken of as the actor in a transaction so remote as Abraham's day, it is also difficult to conceive how Melchizedek can be spoken of as now existing (vers. 3, 8), and his action ages ago be expressed by the perfect tense, when simultaneous action of others is expressed by the aorist. This difficulty about Melchizedek is precisely the great embarrassment that makes our chap. vii., so difficult of interpretation and so celebrated as one of "the old *crucis interpretum*"¹ of the New Testament. The Apostle, however, represents Jesus as having taken tithes of Abraham, on the ground of his being declared a priest after the order of Melchizedek. A priest after the order of the Levitical priesthood, was not only such in character, but he also did what Levitical priests did when their order was instituted by Moses, *e. g.*, they took tithes of their brethren. A priest after the order of Melchizedek must do what Melchizedek did. What Melchizedek *did* as priest, cannot be represented otherwise than as in vers. 1-3, where his tithing and blessing Abraham are mentioned. As regards priestly performances of Melchizedek, only two things are mentioned there, viz., that he blessed Abraham and took tithes of him. The meeting Abraham was not one of them, and remains expressed by the aorist (vers. 1, 10). The circumstances of the case, therefore, only admit of representing, that a priest, after the order of Melchizedek, **has taken tithes**

¹ Comp. Auberlen, Melchizedek's ewiges Leben u. Priesterthum, "Stud u. Krit, 1857 p. 453 sqq.

of Abraham, and has blessed Abraham (ver. 6 *b*). The Levitical priests of any period from Moses to the destruction of the Temple, A. D. 70, could prove the privilege and distinction of their order by pointing to their actual practice of taking tithes. And they would express that existing practice did they say: "we have taken tithes of our brethren." But did the order now claim to be still perpetuated in living representatives, and did they assert their privileges, they would say: "we have taken tithes of our brethren," referring to what was true as actual fact only ages ago. Similarly, the Apostle, in asserting the greatness of Jesus as a High priest after the order of Melchizedek, may say: **he has tithed Abraham and he has blessed Abraham.** Nor can we conceive in what other way he could represent the distinction and peculiarity of a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, *consistently with representing that the order still exists, and has its rights in force.* To say of the Levitical order of priests: "they took tithes of their brethren," implies that the order is a thing of the past; and one claiming to be of that order now, with none of its privileges in force, would be but a shadow of what the order once was. And similarly, did the Apostle only represent in our vers. 4-10 what *was true* of Melchizedek, and not true of Jesus, but only imaging what Jesus would be, he would be leaving Jesus, with his claim, to be of the order of Melchizedek, only the shadow of what that priest of God Most High really was.

The Apostle appropriately says, then, **This One**, meaning this Priest after the order of Melchizedek, **has taken tithes of Abraham** without needing such a warrant for tithing as if he counted his genealogy from the Levites. And the items included in this contrast are, that he has his warrant neither by virtue of descent, nor on the ground of commandment, nor limited by prescription of law for the case. It is on the ground of his personal eminence, and it is, as ver. 4 says, from the chief and choice portions of the spoils that the tenth has been given to him. Moreover, he has tithed Abraham, who stood in no relation to him but that of one that recognized his eminence.

Continuing with *καὶ* = **and**, which has the same force as that

of the two preceding and continues it, the Apostle adds, a third consideration.

Ver, 6 b. **And [he] hath blessed him that hath the promises. 7. Now without any dispute the less is blessed by the better.**

"It is not easy to understand why 6 b has been commonly connected with what precedes, and not with ver. 7. . . . It is quite in place to designate Abraham particularly as the possessor of the promises, that is of the sum total of all that promises salvation, where it concerns blessing him, and not where it concerns taking tithes of him. As possessor of the promises, he is the one blessed of God in the fullest sense. Is This One, with his tithing Abraham, superior to the order of things created by the law, so too, by blessing Abraham, he is superior to the salvation comprised in promise."¹ The self-evidential appeal in proof of **This One** being **the better** who blesses (ver. 7), cannot be made more forcible by comment. But it is to be noted, that now the Apostle says: **the better**, and not: **the greater**. Not that a different notion is thereby expressed, but, while expressing that **This One** is greater than Abraham, it resumes the notion of betterness already presented (vi. 9 ; i. 4), and involves, as we have seen at 1, 4, the thought of "better for you, or for us."

And now follows a fourth consideration :

Ver. 8. **And here indeed men that die receive tithes ; but there [one of whom it is] testified that he liveth.**

The **here** and **there** are used with reference to the temporal nearness and remoteness of the things spoken of. The Levitical tithing is near to the Author ; the transaction with Abraham remote. What is now said, passing from Abraham, introduces a direct contrast with the Levitical priesthood to show how great **This One** is compared with that. The Levitical priesthood was perpetuated through a succession of dying men. And both: **men**, and : **that die** are emphatic.² The idea is, that they receive tithes only as members for the time of their order, with no other title to do so than what passes from one to the other.³ This is an idea relative to the Levitical priesthood that recurs later with

¹ von Hof., exchanging his Melchizedek as subject, for "This One."

² Alford.

³ von Hof.

reference to sacrifices.¹ But now it is mentioned with reference to tithing, because that subject is present and belongs to what concerns the merit of the order in itself. When sacrifices come to be spoken of, it will concern the importance and benefit of the order to *others* for whom they make sacrifices. In contrast with the case of these mortal functionaries, the Apostle places **This One**, and the fact that **he liveth**. He says : he is **attested** that He lives, and he means the testimony of Ps. cx. That is his text ; and no where else is there testimony of the sort connected with the notion of Melchizedek. To the objection² that Melchizedek “does not now take tithes,” and that, therefore, we must look to Gen. xiv. for this witness, we can reply that the Apostle says of **This One** : “he has taken tithes of Abraham,” and he has nothing else in mind ; and **This One** does not mean the historical Melchizedek. The present notion is, that **he lives**, and his order is perpetuated in himself and because he lives. It is not something to be conceived of as distinct from himself. The superiority both of person and order to the Levitical priesthood so brought out in relief is so evident as to need no amplification. Yet it is only so when we understand that : “now liveth,” is affirmed only of Jesus, and not of Melchizedek. Were there another that lives forever, he would share the distinction with Jesus, and to that extent diminish the force there would be in such a fact when affirmed of one alone. Not because two priests would come in conflict.³ But because what is pointed to as a mark of pre-eminence and distinction ceases to be such when said of more than Jesus. But there is only one testimony **that he lives**. It is Ps. cx., and that testifies this only of Christ and no other. In what is now presented, the Apostle gives application to that item of the elements, vers. 1–3, that states : “he remaineth a priest forever.” He presses it to show the superiority of Jesus to Levitical priests.

To the same effect he adds yet another and the *fifth* consideration :

Ver. 9. **And, so to speak, through Abraham, Levi, also, who**

¹ Vers. 23–25.

² Of von Hof.

³ Alford ; comp. de Wette and Lindsay on ver. 3.

receiveth tithes has been tithed; 10. for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

The meaning of this is plain enough. But it is obviously an unusual thing to say, though legitimate reasoning in a matter like the present, that concerns, not the moral quality and consequences of the action referred to, but only its significance as to comparative greatness. Superiority to Abraham involved superiority to all descended from him. There is a vigor and striking effect in the form of presenting this notion that escapes analysis. It brings the Levitical priesthood into direct relation with the action and the significance of Abraham's paying tithes. "Jesus has tithed the Levitical priesthood," presents a notion that leaves the latter in unmistakable inferiority. Yet, as something strained, and not to be pressed to other consequences, the Author qualifies the expression by a: **so to speak**. We may note that this: **so to speak** shows the fine sense of propriety of the Author; and we may reflect that it justifies us in refusing, as above, to understand ver. 6, as if he emphasized the notion that Melchizedek was not descended from Levites. Such a notion, if presented for any purpose whatever, must surely call for an *ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν*, or the like, much more than the representation of our ver. 10. As already remarked, the mention of Melchizedek with an aorist predicate (*ὅτε συνήντησεν αὐτῷ Μελχ.*) denotes that the historical Melchizedek is treated as a different subject from **This One** which is the active subject (ver. 9) of the passive perfect *δεδικάτωται*. We take it, moreover, as additional confirmation of our view (viz., that the Author means Jesus where he seems to speak of Melchizedek), that in our vers. 9, 10, he means the Levitical order when he names Levi. For *Λευεῖς ὁ δεκάτας λαμβάνων* means the order that according to the law has and uses the prerogative of tithing. He means the Levites in general, and these he calls Levi.

The Apostle has now handled the elements enumerated in vers. 1-3, to show the superiority of Jesus, the Melchizedekian Priest; and he has shown him to be greater and better *in five particulars*.¹ (1.) Greater than Abraham because he has tithed

¹ So von Hof.

Abraham (ver. 4); (2.) greater than the Levitical priesthood in that he took tithes without needing the warrant they had (ver. 5, 6 *a*). (3.) Better than Abraham because he has blessed Abraham (vers. 6 *b*, 7). (4.) Better than the Levitical priesthood because he lives forever (ver. 8); and (5,) because they are involved in the inferiority confessed by Abraham when he paid tithes. All this concerns the greatness (*πηλίκος ὄντος*) of **This One** *considered in himself, and as contrasted with the priesthood* to whom Jewishly inclined persons were giving precedence as means of access to God and as the ground of acceptability with God.

Taking, now, the points gained, along with the elements (vers. 1-3) from which he is reasoning, the Apostle proceeds to press further consequences of the utmost importance in the matter of salvation; and now we observe, as a mark of the progress of thought, that these concern the greatness of **This One** *considered with reference to those who need priestly mediation.*

Ver. 11. If then, indeed, there was perfection by means of the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received law), what further need for a different priest to be raised up after the order of Melchizedek and not called after the order of Aaron?

This touches the vital matter of salvation. For *τελείωσις* = perfection means the goal of a perfect relation to God;¹ and it is assumed that this is to be attained only through the mediation of priestly acts. It is not the Apostle's purpose here to prove that the law and the priesthood could make nothing perfect.² He deals with this topic x. 1 sqq. Here he assails these directly with inferences founded on the elements enumerated above, taken with the conclusions of vers. 4-10, relating to the comparative greatness of Jesus. He assumes that perfection is what those seek who look to law and offerings and priests. The ability to make perfect is then the test of the adequacy of the Levitical priesthood. Whatever is adequate for a purpose, God has made so. And what He has made so He will not supersede by another agent. He will not even set up a competing agent.³ If then God appoints another priest, of a different order from those

¹ x. 1, 14; von Hof.

² Against von Hof.

³ *χρεία, necessitas.*—*Nam Deus nil facit frustra.* Bengel.

existing, it is evidence that the existing priesthood was not intended to give salvation. The appointment of another order of priest is proof that there was need for it. The need appears in this, viz., that perfection must come through priestly mediation, and the existing priesthood did *not* mediate perfection.

The $\alpha\tilde{\nu}\nu$ = **then**, continues the discourse inferentially with reference to the matters already presented vers. 1-10. The $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$ = **if**, introduces hypothetically the notion of the Levitical priesthood being the means of perfection, by which is intimated, that not this notion is to be considered, but another. Therefore, as said above, it is not the topic here to prove that the law and the Levitical priesthood could make nothing perfect. The other notion and actual topic is, that the Levitical priesthood would suffice, and there would be no need for another order of priest. Yet there *is* another order raised up; and the question arises: what need of it? The need appears in what is actually the effect of it. This effect the Apostle represents here. To the mention of the Levitical priesthood as related to perfection, the Apostle adds a parenthesis: **or under it** (*i. e.*, this priesthood) **the people received law**. He adds this because the notion of perfection postulates law which is the criterion of the perfection. With the Levitical priesthood there was a corresponding law. The $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\pi' \alpha\tilde{\nu}\tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ = **under it**, is to be taken temporally,¹ as we say: under King William III. With the institution of the Levitical order a corresponding law was given to the people whose priests they were, and the priestly order itself had continuance by giving effect to that law. It is not the law of Moses that is meant here, nor yet is it a different law;² but it is the law for the people involved in the institution of the Levitical priesthood,³ according to whose prescriptions the people must seek the mediation of the priesthood, and the priesthood must act as their mediators. The priesthood and the corresponding law are, then, inseparable notions. And as they are conjoined here, so the Apostle continues, in the following context, to treat both as equally involved in the consequences attending the raising up

¹ See Passow Lex., s. v., I. 3.

² von Hof., comp. ver. 19.

³ Against Lün., Alford, Del.

of another order of priesthood. In the case thus put hypothetically, the Apostle asks: **what need still for a different** (^{ἑτερον}) **priest to be raised up** (^{ἀνίστασθαι} passive, not middle)¹ **after the order of Melchizedek, and called not after the order of Aaron?** The *οὐ* connects with *κατὰ τ. τάξιν Α.*,² as what is expressed is, that by naming him after Melchizedek it is meant he is declared not to be an Aaronic priest. The *ἀνίστασθαι* is to be taken passively because it is important here, as before,³ that this priest is raised up as such by God's act declared Ps. cx., and not that he arises of himself. What God wills is fundamental in all this argument. And so the question is contemplated in the light of the past when God spake in Ps. cx. The *ἦν* = **was** expresses: if there *was then* perfection by the Aaronic priesthood.

In justification of the question now proposed, the Apostle expresses what is involved in instituting another order of priesthood.

Ver 12. For if the priesthood is changed, there takes place also a change of law.

Thus we translate *μετατιθεμένης τ. ἱερωσύνης*⁴ to avoid giving the impression that the Author speaks of a past transaction, as the rendering: "the priesthood being changed"⁵ would do. He is stating a universal proposition. And the first clause implies the unexpressed affirmation, that raising up another order of priest expressly called not Aaronic, is a change of priesthood. Thus it connects by **for** with ver. 11. The mention of **law** here connects with the parenthesis of ver. 11, and the affirmation of our verse is on the ground of the close relation of the priesthood and law there noticed.⁶ The Apostle speaks here of **change**, whereas at ver. 18, he comes out with the more sweeping statement of "abrogation" = *ἀθρόγησις*. There seems in this an intentional mildness of expression,⁷ as if to let the truth grow on the readers, and not to alarm them by precipitating all of the

¹ With von Hof., comp. Acts iii. 22; vii. 37; xiii. 32, against *e. g.*, Bleek, de Wette, Lün., Eng. Verss. 1611; 1881.

² von Hof., Lün., Alford.

³ v. 5, 6.

⁴ With Alford.

⁵ E. Version, 1611 and 1881.

⁶ So Lün., Alford, against Del.

⁷ Lün., Alford.

conclusion. Yet stated as in our verse, the truth is radical and revolutionary. But it is axiomatic. The only question that can arise is, whether there is actually a change in the priesthood. The Apostle, accordingly, *having intimated that there is*, proceeds to fortify the statement. Speaking from his Psalm text ex. 4, as God's declaration concerning Christ, and assuming that Jesus is the Christ, the Apostle proceeds to give additional proof that making *him* priest changes the priesthood, beside the proof found in His being called after Melchizedek and *not* after Aaron. This proof appears in what are the facts concerning Jesus himself.

Ver. 13. **For he of whom these things are said, hath partaken of a different tribe, from which no one hath given attendance at the altar.** 14. **For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah, with reference to which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priests.**

The **For** does not connect with verse 12 to adduce proof that there is a change of law.¹ What is stated as a necessary effect (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) needs no proof. **For** refers to the unexpressed affirmation implied in the premise: "if the priesthood is changed" (ver. 12), which, connected by "for" with the mention (ver. 11) of "a different priest not called Aaronic," expresses the full import of that fact.

By: **are said**, ver. 13, reference is had to Ps. ex., which is the Apostle's text. By ταῦτα = **these things**, is meant the saying "thou art a priest," etc., as the notion Melchizedek has been amplified in vers. 1-3. The: **different tribe**, means other than the tribe of Levi. Nothing can make the statements of our verses plainer than they appear there.

But we may pause to remark² that ver. 14 shows that no perplexity was experienced at the time of this writing about the genealogy of Jesus; and such authority as the Author abundantly compensates for weakness that appears in the chain of evidence we now have that He was descended as was claimed. *Rem olim liquidam fuisse, et constat et sufficit.* The Author, indeed, assumes only that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, because that is precisely what is important to his argument. But

¹ Against Lün., Alford, Davidson.

² With Bengel.

the claim that Jesus descended from David was made as prominent and as important as that he descended from Judah. In the first preaching of the gospel the two were so combined, with such special stress on the Davidic descent of Jesus, that such a reference as ver. 14, to one part of the current belief of Christians at that time involves the acceptance of the other.

The Apostle uses the expression: **our Lord**, on which it is worth remarking, that this is the only place in scripture where Christ is so called; 2 Pet. iii. 15, being hardly an exception.¹

It confirms our construction of the foregoing context from ver. 4 (in which we regard Jesus, the Melchizedekian priest, as the direct subject of all that seems to others to be said of Melchizedek himself), that here and onwards to ver. 25, Jesus is expressed as the subject. This occurs: (*a*) without anything to note a change of subject, but only as our Author must name it, and not leave it too long unnamed, and, as here, sustained only by a demonstrative pronoun (*οὗτος*); and (*b*) with no change in the nature of the things affirmed of the subject, but, on the contrary, with reiteration of identical notions, as in vers. 15, 16, and 23, 24; comp. vers. 3, 8.

Ver. 15. **And it** (*i. e.*, what we say) **is yet more abundantly evident**, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there is raised up a different priest, 16. **Who has become** [priest] **not according to a law of a carnal commandment, but according to a power of an endless life.**

We have noted at ver. 12 that the Apostle has stated an axiomatic proposition, the only debatable term of which is, whether there is really a change of the priesthood. In support of this premise, as the notion has been intimated or assumed in the hypothetical clause of ver 12, he has adduced the statement of vers. 13, 14. He adduces further support of this in our verses 15, 16. What he means as being **more abundantly evident** is the change of priesthood which needs proof, and not that the law is changed,² which, as has been noted, needs no proof, but is affirmed to be *a necessary consequence* of the former. Yet owing

¹ Alford; but comp. τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν xiii. 20, and ii. 3; xii. 14.

² Against Lün., Alford, Davidson; with Stuart.

to the identity of the two notions already expressed, a main point of the argument is, that the law, as well as the priesthood, is changed, which is established by establishing that there is a change of priesthood. God's raising up (ἀνίσταται is to be taken as passive and not middle, for the same reasons given ver. 11, regarding ἀνίστασθαι) a priest of a different order, and the priest being accordingly taken from a different tribe (as vers. 13, 14), are evidence of God's changing the priesthood. This is still more evident if *this different priest* remains forever a priest; obviously because the order is thus perpetuated with all that makes it different and distinct. Being thus instituted by God, he means that his people shall look to this priest, and not to the existing priesthood. Such is the argument. In the Apostle's statement of it, his mention of **a different priest** resumes the notion established vers. 13, 14, to add another trait of this priest. The representations of our present verses are not meant to explain the notion: **different**.¹ And, similarly: **after the likeness of Melchizedek**, resumes the idea already expressed or rather expressly assumed ver. 11, and is therefore not expressed for the purpose of having **the likeness** defined by ver 16.² The Author, then, in the expression: **if after the order of Melchizedek a different priest**,³ resumes the two essential facts already established, and in the order of their previous mention, to add another and crowning one in the present argument, and so presents all together as convincingly evidential (κατάδηλον) of the fact that there is a change of priesthood. The additional statement: **who has become** a priest, etc., is made on the authority of the Psalm text, as the citing of it, ver. 17 shows. It is substantially, that Jesus, this different priest, remains forever. But this is expressed in a way to point the contrast with the changeable Aaronic priesthood. **He has become priest not according to a law of a carnal commandment**, and thereby is intimated that the Aaronic priests did so become priests, which explains their being changeable, *i. e.*, that they were not intended to be a perpetual order. By **law**, without the article we must understand the same as in

¹ Against Lün., etc.² Against Del., von Hof.³ Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 32.

ver. 11. Defined as : of a **carnal commandment** (ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης)¹ and limited to ordinances instituting and regulating the Aaronic priesthood, etc., according to the antithesis presented by the following clause, this law concerned things of flesh. The men it made priests, with all that they became, and performed by such law, were left in the natural state of changeable and perishable life. As such they might be expected to pass away. This "different priest," on the contrary, became such **according to power of indissoluble life**. Not by law at all, therefore; but by **power** and according to **life**, and a life that is described as **indissoluble**, not subject to change or death, as flesh is.

It may even be doing more justice to the Apostle's thought to understand² that he points a threefold contrast, viz., of **law** and **power, commandment** and **life, carnal** and **indissoluble**. The Aaronic priesthood was instituted by law : this other Priest by power. And, for explanation of what is meant, we may take v. 5, 6, which represents how Christ was made priest by the immediate fiat of God. The Aaronic priesthood manifested itself and was operative by means of commandments, which it kept and gave to the people ; this other Priesthood manifested itself in life, which Christ has in Himself and gives to His people.³ The commandment with which the Aaronic priesthood was identified, "belonged to that preliminary pedagogic stage that was not yet concerned with implanting a spiritual life in mankind dead through sin, but dealt only with the outward limits of sin and types of salvation for natural and fleshly men. (This is the meaning σαρκικός Gal. iii. 3). The life [of this other Priest] is made indissoluble, *i. e.*, it has in it the forces of eternity."⁴

The opinion is maintained, that the Apostle affirms this indissoluble life of Jesus only as exalted after death to be a High Priest forever. And von Hofmann expressly appeals to the fact that, while in the flesh, Jesus was subject to change and death as other men, and accordingly died. But to this consideration just named,

¹ Instead of σαρκικῆς of the Recept.; so all the editions; Lün., von Hof, Alford.

² With Ebrard, who appeals to Carpzov, Kuinoel.

³ Comp. John v. 21, 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

⁴ Ebrard ; against Del.

it may be opposed, that Apostolic preaching claimed for Jesus a life that made it impossible for Him to be holden of death.¹ And from our context, we observe that the Apostle speaks of Jesus as descended from Judah, and as such, with this evidence on him of being a different priest from those descended from Levi, he describes him as having become priest according to power of indissoluble life. Did he mean that He was such a priest, not as Jesus of the tribe of Judah, but only in respect to His exaltation to heaven, it would need to be expressed here. We maintain, therefore, as has always been understood, that the Apostle means here "the life of Christ in general; he had the power of imperishable life in Himself from the beginning, although it was not till His resurrection that this was revealed."²

In proof of the important statement he has just made, the Apostle once more quotes his Psalm text.

Ver. 17. **For it is testified that Thou art priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**

The emphasis is on **forever** and on that alone.

The Apostle, having represented the comparative greatness of the Melchizedek Priest (vers. 4-10), by reference to the elements enumerated vers. 1-3, has now (vers. 11-17), we observe, pressed the fact, also intimated vers. 3, 4, that this is a different order of priesthood from the Aaronic. A different order means a change of priesthood, and a change of priesthood means a change of law pertaining to such an institution. The change of priesthood can be the only doubtful thing. He has, therefore, directed his discourse to that. Everything that shows it to be different is proof that there has been such a change. He has pointed to three marks: (a) it is called by a different name; (b) the Priest is from another tribe than Levi; (c) he is a Priest that remains forever. The priesthood has, then, been changed by that divine word of Ps. cx. Consequently, the law concerning priests, and concerning the people who need their mediation, is changed.

The Apostle introduced this part of the subject by asking:

¹ Acts ii. 24; John x. 15-18. And see below xiii. 20, and von Hofmann's comment.

² Riehm p. 458, Anmerk; and Lün., Lindsay.

what need is there for such a change of priesthood, if the Levitical could be the means of perfection? This intimates that there was need for the change, viz., in the essential matter of coming to enjoy a perfect relation toward God. It was not to glorify God by two orders of priests instead of one. It was instituting a Priest to do what the other order could not do. With ver. 17, the Apostle has finished the proof that there has been raised up a totally different order of Priest, and that thus the priesthood has been changed. He now proceeds to represent the consequence already expressed, viz., that there is a change of law, and that this is in order to secure the perfection that made another order than the Levitical priesthood necessary.

Ver. 18. **For, indeed, an abrogation takes place of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness** 19. (for the law perfected nothing), but a bringing in thereupon of a **better hope** [takes place] through which we draw near to God.

In the present statement of the notion already expressed ver. 12, the Apostle gives it as an ascertained conclusion, and now expresses it in its whole extent. The commandment involved in the Aaronic priesthood is changed to the extent of **abrogation**. For such is the meaning of ἀφελτης = "abolition."¹ He calls the commandment: **a foregoing commandment**, i. e., antecedent to "the word of the oath,"² and thus intimates that it was in its intention only provisional. He says, moreover, it was **weak and profitless**, and thus explains how it could only be provisional. **Unprofitable** expresses its relation to those for whom it was a commandment, viz., the people, and in the present connection the sense is: it is unprofitable to mediate perfection,³ vii. 18, 19, i. e., to save.⁴ "Our ver. 18 is not a general statement, but declares what happens when the Melchizedek Priest is raised up. Thus the emphasis rests on that fact, and not the explanation: διὰ τὸ αὐτης ἀσθενεῖς κ. ἀνωφελές, where the neuter adjective is used instead of the abstract substantive, because it is not so much a quality of the commandment that is mentioned, as the actual fact, that it was weak and profitless, and inasmuch as it was so."⁵ In jus-

¹ Grimm., Lex., Alford.

² comp. ver. 28.

³ ver. 11.

⁴ ver. 25.

⁵ von Hof.; against Del.

tification of what he says about the commandment, the Apostle adds, in parenthesis, that **the law** generally, of which the commandment in question formed so fundamental a part, brought nothing to perfection, and has in no respect brought about a perfect relation to God.¹

As the antithesis² of the commandment and of the actual experience of its unprofitableness and of its consequent abrogation, the Apostle declares (still expounding his Psalm-text): **a bringing in thereupon of a better hope** [takes place.] The *ἐπί* in *ἐπισταγωγή* expresses that the new enters there where hitherto the old existed. The priesthood with its commandment is abrogated, and in the place comes the Priest and hope.

The word **better** does not express comparison between something common to the commandment and to what takes the place of the commandment, as if both presented hope, but the latter a better hope.³ The commandment and hope are contrasted. The former is found to be profitless, *i. e.*, good for nothing in the matter of perfection, though not profitless in every respect. The hope that comes in its place is better than it, because it *is* profitable in the very respect in which the other is not. And this profitableness is expressed in the words; **through which we draw near to God**. Drawing near to God can only be truly done by virtue of the perfection that comes through priestly mediation. This **better hope** is the same that has been set forth so gloriously vi. 19, as entering within the vail, where Christ has entered into the presence of God, a forerunner for us. Here it is consistently represented as that by which we draw near to God. We follow our forerunner. Our hope is where he is, and is what he makes it there. He, as priest, has drawn near to God, and brings us there.

Every reader of our vers. 18, 19 is reminded of Gal. iv. 9; Rom. viii. 3. "No one can doubt that it is one of those coincidences which could hardly take place where there was not community of thought and diction."⁴ We think, however, that we trace still more; even nothing less than a common author.

¹ von Hof.² *μὲν—δέ*, with Lün., Del., von Hof.; against Alford.³ Against von Hof.⁴ Alford.

The likeness of our context extends to a likeness between vers. 16 and Rom. viii. 2, where: "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death," seems to be the very truth expressed by calling Christ: "a priest raised up not according to a law of carnal commandment, but according to power of life indissoluble." It is the same truth doing service in Rom. viii., among Gentile Christians, as here it does service among Jewish Christians. It is but the same Author speaking in two situations, as it is the same truth for two different relations. It is evident enough, "that the circle of ideas in which we find ourselves here is, although a substantially allied, yet a somewhat different one from that of those two Pauline Epistles."¹ But some,² while admitting this, find in *τελείωσις* an un-Pauline way of expressing the sum of all Christian aims: and *ἀσθενές* and *ἀνωφελές*, as describing the law, to mean something less revolutionary of previous notions of law than the similar utterances in Romans and Galatians. As for the latter, with *ἀθέτησις ἐντολῆς* before our eyes, we fail to see any truth in the view. As for *τελείωσις* and *τελειούν*, there is a peculiar fitness in such terms when discoursing, as our Author does, to Jewish Christians on the subjects here presented; whereas, when addressing Gentile Christians, he might find *πληροῦν* and *πλήρωμα*,³ adequate expressions for the same ideas as applied to their case. So Paul continues *l. c.* Rom. viii. 4, *ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τ. νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν.*

The Apostle has shown the comparative greatness of the Melchizedek Priest, as to his dignity considered in itself (vers. 4–11). He then shows his superiority considered with reference to the need of the people by pressing the consequence of his being raised up a different order of priest, viz., that it means the abrogation of the Aaronic priesthood and law (vers. 11–19). In the conclusion of this second argument, he also declares what the Melchizedek Priest brings in with his new order, viz., "a better hope by which we draw near to God." This is a chief thought in all the presentation of Christ from iv. 14–16; and has been

¹ Del.² *e. g.* Del.³ Eph. iii. 19; iv. 13; Phil. i. 11; Col. i. 10, 24, 25; ii. 10; iv. 12, where mark the *τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι* Rec. *πεπληρωμένοι*; 2. Thess. i. 11, 12.

repeated vi. 19. And this key note will (ix. 1—x. 19 sqq.), be “expanded into a whole strain of argument.”¹ At this point the Apostle uses it to set forth in another light the superiority of the Melchizedek Priest to the Aaronic priesthood. We say, another light, viz., in the following respect. In verses 11-19, that superiority has been set forth *negatively*, as it involves the abrogation of the Aaronic priesthood and showing how that was treated as weak and profitless. The superiority is now to be set forth *positively*, as it appears in its own intrinsic worth. This is already presented, as just said, in the concluding words of verse 19. Therefore, what is added is appropriately conjoined by καὶ = **And**.

Ver. 20 (a). **And inasmuch as not without an oath** [does this induction of a better hope take place] . . 22. **by so much also hath Jesus become surety of a better covenant.**

The ellipsis in ver. 20 must be supplied from the statement immediately preceding,² which requires nothing more than a γίνεται to be understood. The emphasis of the thought just expressed ver. 19, would make the reader supply it as subject here, unless the words immediately following would pointedly present another. It is obvious, however, that such is not the case, from the fact that those who look there for the subject are divided whether to supply ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔστιν γέγονός,³ or διαθήκης ἔργους γέγονε.⁴ With regard to the former of these, it would seem enough that it is left to be supplied once in the very clause itself, from which it would be drawn as subject for ver. 20 a. In regard to the latter, the long parenthesis ver. 20 b-21, makes it much too remote. In the foregoing translation, we have left out the parenthesis (ver. 20 b-21) by which the Apostle represents how it was a fact that the better hope was brought in by an oath. He does this by quoting again his Psalm text (cx. 4); this time citing the words that are to the point: **The Lord sware and will not repent himself**, and which he has so far made no use of in this extended exposition of the text. At the same time he omits: “after the order of Melchizedek.” That the oath which

¹ Alford.² So Del., von Hof., de Wette, Bleek; against Alford, etc.³ Lün.⁴ Ebrard, Alford.

made Christ a priest brought in the **better hope** is precisely the result reached by his antecedent exposition vers. 11-19. The Psalm is not again quoted to prove that, but to remind that it was done by an oath, and to point the precise significance of the oath, viz., that what was established thus was never to be changed (and will not repent himself). In this representation, a contrast is made between the Aaronic priesthood and Christ as Melchizedek priest (οἱ μὲν—ὁ δέ); **for they, without an oath, are the priests they became** (εἰσὶν γεγονότες)¹ **but he with an oath by him who saith unto² him, etc.** The time of saying this is in the Psalm, that is conceived of as a continually present word of God. This explains the τοῦ λέγοντος, and also answers³ the captiousness that would object that, in the Psalm itself, only the latter words of the clause: ὤμοσεν . . αἰῶνα, are imputed to God. The affirmation that the Aaronic priests were not established by an oath, neither in general, nor successively and singly, is founded, not merely on the absence of any record to that effect, but also (and this rather), on what was known of the priests that were (εἰσὶν)⁴ at the time of this writing. The point of the contrast here made is, that seeing God made Christ a priest with an oath, and the oath was the guarantee that there should be no change in this, therefore it is intimated, that the priests that were made priests without an oath might be changed. God had not guaranteed their perpetuity. Thus the Aaronic priesthood with its commandment was left liable to be changed, whereas, the Melchizedek Priest and His better hope were established in perpetuity. Speaking, then, of the better hope coming to pass by an oath, the Author says, inasmuch, as this was so, **by so much also hath Jesus become surety of a better covenant.**

The **betterness** means here the unchangeable perpetuity of the hope connected with this Melchizedek Priest. The contrast of the parenthesis shows this. **By so much** expresses measure, and the oath with the unchangeable priesthood it establishes is the measure. The same **hope** has been described (vi. 19) as "sure

¹ Not the same as γεγόνασιν; with Del., von Hof., Alford; against de Wette, Lün. The following γέγονε marks that a difference is intended.

² πρὸς, comp. i. 7.

³ So von Hof.

⁴ See Alford.

and steadfast." But the Apostle here says : **covenant**, and not "hope." This is not because he means something wholly different, which is impossible, owing to the logical connection with the premise : **inasmuch as not without an oath it came about**, viz., "the better hope." And whatever is supplied in the premise, the same relation would exist between that and **covenant**. By saying : **better covenant**, the Apostle indirectly affirms that the **better hope** is based on a **covenant**, which is **better** for the same reason that the hope is. In fact, this is a warning note of a new phase of his theme, that the Apostle means to amplify, and on which he enters viii. 7 sqq. We have had other instances of the same manner of introducing his topics of discourse, and we shall have more. Of this covenant, he says : **Jesus has become surety**. A **surety** (ἔγγυος) is one that is pledged as guaranteeing a thing *e. g.*, an agreement or promise. Jesus is such in relation to a **better covenant** that concerns "a better hope," because, according to the context as just explained, the oath that makes His priesthood perpetual makes the better hope "sure and steadfast," and makes the **better covenant** the same. As for when, or how He became surety, the context offers no other idea than that it was by the oath that made him Melchizedek Priest. And this is what is meant and no more ; and it is surely enough. We must not confound the notions of **surety** and **mediator** (μεσίτης, viii. 6). It is such confusion when the surety of Jesus for the covenant, is supposed to be by virtue of His having offered Himself here and of His presence with God now.¹ Jesus is surety for the covenant and the promise because He and they are identified ; the Melchizedek Priest and the promise, as the bondsman and the bond. What makes His priesthood sure and unailing, makes the covenant and hope sure in the same degree. The context contemplates Jesus only as priest, and the only thing that makes Him sure as a priest is the oath that made Him such, and that is never to change.

The Author here again, as has been noted above in anticipation, names Jesus as the subject of whom he speaks as he expounds the meaning of Ps. cx. 4. In vers. 24, 25, he applies to Him

¹ Against Del.

the notion of perpetuity expressed in the Psalm, that he has already applied vers. 3, 8, 16, 17. Though the names Melchizedek and Jesus suggest different subjects, there is nothing in all the context vers. 1-25, that expressly distinguishes them, *e. g.*, as the *οἱ μὲν—ὁ δὲ* distinguish Jesus and the Aaronic priesthood. On the other hand, the representations drawn from Ps. cx. 4 are applied in a uniform manner to the subject, whether named Melchizedek or Jesus, or represented by the pronouns *ὁὗτος, ὅς*. We maintain, therefore, that in all this representation, only one subject is meant, viz., Jesus Melchizedek.

The Apostle adds one more consideration from Ps. cx. 4, to illustrate the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Aaronic, and it is the second in illustration of the positive aspect of this subject, viz., his merit with respect to those who need priestly mediation¹.

Ver. 23. **And they, indeed, are a plurality become priests, because hindered by death from remaining ; 24. but he, because he remains forever, has his priesthood unchangeable ;**

This thought, as derived from Ps. cx., has been used before, ver. 8, in reference to tithing, to illustrate the superiority of the Melchizedek Priest in respect to dignity and in himself considered ; and again, vers. 15-17, to show that superiority with reference to the existing priesthood, marking a different order of priesthood and as being something before which the latter must change and go down. Here it is used again to represent, that the Melchizedek Priest is never to yield his priesthood to another.¹ Thus, not only the priesthood, but the Priest remain the same. And Jesus is the surety of a better covenant as one that remains forever to give it effect Himself.

In pointing the contrast here, it is said that the existing priesthood are become such in numbers or plurality. We need not suppose the appeal is to anything but the familiar fact. The reason for the fact is assigned : they were **hindered by death from remaining**, *i. e.*, remaining the priests they were ;² (not : remaining alive).³ And when it is said of Jesus : **because he remains forever**, the contrast is, that the existing priests were subject to

¹ von Hof., Del., Lün., Alford.

² von Hof., Del., Alford.

³ Lün.

death which put an end to their priestly activity.¹ This contrast of many always changing, and One that remains in possession of His priesthood, discharging its functions, makes the latter as a person totally different from the others as persons. The persons of the others counted for nothing. This Person counts for everything. His office, its functions, in fact everything is summed up in Himself. He makes perfect. He saves. This conclusion the Author proceeds to draw without pause :

Ver. 25. **Whence also he is able to save to the uttermost those approaching God through him, ever living as he does to intercede for them.**

This, we say follows without pause, and, with most editions of the text,² we would sever it from what precedes only by a colon.

The εἰς τὸ παντελές means "wholly, completely," comprehending the utmost that is involved in the predicate. As in Luke xiii. 11 (the only instance of its use in the New Testament beside here), it means that the woman could not raise herself completely, i. e., to the perfect uprightness proper to the human form. So Jesus can do everything that pertains to saving. **To save** is the emphatic notion here, and not that **he is able**, as the position of σῶζειν in the sentence shows. But it is to save, as the verbal notion is completed by the adverbial εἰς τὸ παντελές, that is emphatic. Saying that Jesus **is able to save to the uttermost**, expresses a contrast with the Levitical priesthood and what was inferentially expressed concerning it (ver. 11), viz.: that perfection was not to be had through them. Whatever they could do about salvation, it was not **to the uttermost**. The Author will show later how far it was from saving at all.³ But by declaring here that Jesus can save to the uttermost, he shows that there is no need for another Saviour. He will put it more uncompromisingly further on, that there is no other way of salvation. Such being the only indication of the context as to what is here meant by **to save**, we see that it has its usual solemn New Testament sense of rescuing from sin and condemnation,⁴ or in other words, the

¹ von Hof.

³ Comp. ix. 9, 10; x. 1-4.

² Against Alford, von Hof.

⁴ Bleek, Alford.

same meaning with which the Author uses the substantive "salvation" (*σωτηρία*).¹

We must, therefore, reject the view² that understands the salvation to refer only to deliverance out of such trials as those experience who are already delivered from sin and have received salvation. The appeal to iv. 14, as connecting further with ii. 18, does not corroborate that view. The present statement of Christ's effective work in saving must be understood to be a reiteration of what is expressed hortatively (*προσερχώμεθα*) iv. 16. But we have seen in that place, that what is meant is the approaching of those under the law and its condemnation to enter the better and saving relations of the new covenant. And what: "obtain mercy and find grace" means there, **to save** means here. The Apostle is now at the threshold of that part of his subject that treats of the new covenant relations of which Christ is the Mediator. It is in chap. viii.; and our present ver. 25 with 26-28, make a transition to it. There the crowning blessing of the relation that Christ mediates is the promise: "I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins I will remember no more." That expresses the salvation meant here by: **to save**, both as to **the uttermost** (*εἰς τὸ παντελές*) and as to the **ever** (*πάντοτε*). It is because Jesus as the Melchizedek Priest **ever lives to make intercession**, that the iniquities will be remembered no more; and because He is such a High Priest as hereafter described, that the iniquities are blotted out in mercy. **Lives to make intercession** is stated as the equivalent of what is expressed ver. 25 *a*. The Apostle does not think of a priest without the functions of a priest.

Here, as at ii. 3-18; iv. 16, and as he continues to do viii. 7-12; ix. 14, 15; x. 2-4, the Author treats his readers as Jews were to be treated, viz., as sinners under revealed law and condemned by it, and to be delivered from its condemnation. And when he speaks of salvation he means that deliverance.

In the present ver. 25 it is said, Jesus is able to save **those that approach unto God through him**. The *προσερχομένους* does not express a different notion from the *ἐγγίζουσιν* (ver. 19); yet it

¹ i. 14; ii. 3, 10; v. 9; vi. 9.

² Of von Hof.

seems to express more, as being the more appropriate word for that which is done "with boldness,"¹ and finished by being with God and remaining there, while ἐγγίξεν was the technical term for that drawing near that was done only in a typical way and needed to be continually repeated. This approach to God is through Jesus, *i. e.*, by means of (δῆ) Jesus. Those that so approach He can save, and no others.

It is to be noted that **ever liveth** reiterates the expression of ver. 14: "because He remains forever, He has His priesthood unchangeable." This gives special prominence to the truth so expressed, as constituting the crowning characteristic that marks the pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood compared with the Levitical priesthood, and the signal trait that seals all the other traits of pre-eminence that have been enumerated.

As at this point the Apostle has finished the reference to Melchizedek, and with that his exposition of Ps. cx. 4, excepting a reference that occurs ver. 38, we may here pause to make some reflections on both.

The exposition of the Psalm text is the most remarkable example of scriptural exposition that we have from an inspired writer. As an example of exposition alone it claims the most careful study. It is the more comprehensive as a study, because it involves a reference to other matter of record in scripture, viz., Gen. xiv. 18-20. Of his Psalm text the Apostle does not leave a single word unnoticed. He builds successively on each as on a foundation of rock. He appeals to it as a word that God spoke long ago, and that he speaks now while the Author writes. He takes it as spoken of Christ; and as not needing a preliminary word to explain that such was its original meaning. We have seen above at i. 13, that there was the fullest justification for his doing this, as far as Jewish readers were concerned. It is, however, a gross misunderstanding of the spirit with which he treats the scripture, to suppose that this appeal to Ps. cx. is a species of *argumentum ad hominem*, or merely taking his readers on their own ground. It is less, but only less, unworthy to see in his reasoning from Ps. cx. and Gen. xiv., only the manner

¹ iv. 16.

peculiar to Rabbinical schools. A scholar that was held captive by Rabbinical school dialectics could never have come to such an understanding of Christ as is taught from these texts. Nor could one that has such truth to teach commend it by any species of *argumentum ad hominem* conducted so seriously, and at such length, and with no claim to any other foundation for what he says than God's express meaning and purpose. In the use the Apostle makes of his Psalm text, and of Gen. xiv., as the original record that furnishes the foundation for the Psalmist's word, he uses the scripture as the infallible word of God, and regards the Psalmist as doing the same. Infallible, we mean, both in the sense, that the scripture word before him is accurate and exact as a record, and that it is true in respect to the matter revealed. And this appeal is without anything to intimate that the scripture in question had any singular advantage over other Holy Scripture in point of credibility, authenticity or genuineness. It is all with a manner that betokens that the Author would use any text of the same scriptures in the same way. It is only in his treatment of Gen. xiv. 18-20 that the Author seems to resort to a strange method of interpretation. Yet we see that this impression is due more to errors about his meaning than to what he actually represents. Whoever agrees with the foregoing explanations of vii. 1-25, in other words, understands Jesus alone, and not Melchizedek, to be the subject of all that is represented, will feel, with ourselves, that there is nothing far-fetched or strained in the Author's exposition. His inferences from the silence of scripture are just and according to common sense, and such as every expositor must make, and as, in fact, are made every day in interpreting common human discourse. In the reliance he places on every word of scripture, and in his method of interpreting it, the Apostle gives in this exposition a plain, impressive and stimulating example to every student of revelation.

On the Melchizedek subject itself, after having gone through it with the patient scrutiny, and having been rewarded by the clear result of the foregoing investigation, we are sensible of a feeling of disappointment. And we suppose that in other minds

there may arise the exclamation : is that all ! In the plainness of the subject we miss a correspondence with the anticipation we had in approaching it. The result seems not to correspond even to the air of importance that breathes in the representation of the subject. But if the passage has been correctly understood and explained, it is, of course, obvious that the passage itself is not to be found fault with for the feeling of disappointment. This arises from something extraneous to the passage and to the subject it presents. We think it is due to the difficulty we find in putting ourselves in the place of the original readers. And what is our difficulty has been the difficulty of Gentile Christian readers from the first. *We* never had a religion of a divinely appointed priesthood, and sacrifices and commandments. *We* never knew what it was to rely on them as the means of pleasing God, who instituted them. The heathen have similar things ; but their worship was never revealed by the God of that Christ whom they are called to believe and follow. They are not perplexed by the fact that the things they must forsake were once the true means of grace and of acceptable worship, and used by Christ himself, and that they continued to be observed by his Apostles even after Christ was perfected and exalted to the right hand of God. We cannot, therefore, feel what it was to a Christian Jew to be told, that all was changed about the Aaronic priesthood and its attending commandment ; that something else had come in its place ; that it never could establish a complete relation to God, and was never intended to do so ; but that God had raised up another priest for that, and declared his purpose to do so long ago ; that Jesus was that Melchizedek Priest ; and that to Him and Him only they must look for the perfection they had vainly supposed was to be had through the Aaronic priesthood. We cannot, therefore, feel the sentiment of dread and wonder with which a Jewish Christian, who still cherished much of these false hopes, would follow *an Apostle's* reasoning from an express and plain declaration of God's word. We can hardly suspect the emotions with which he would see the following positions well taken and convincingly established : Christ made of God a Priest ; greater than Abraham, and so, of course,

greater than Levi and all descended from him; Christ's a distinct order of priesthood, with traits of superiority, especially its perpetuity, all indicating that the institution of that priesthood meant the abrogation of the existing one; Christ's priesthood endowed with the virtue of providing perfection that brings sinners to God, that the existing priesthood confessedly, at least to the Psalmist, had not; and instituted by an oath securing its perpetuity, which oath gives the utmost significance to the fact that the existing priesthood was never so instituted (viz., that it lacked what was essential to its perpetuity); and Christ the Priest Himself everlasting, while existing priests were dying and others taking their places. To one still held by the old religious sentiments of the Jews, each of these points, as it came clearly to view, must have been apprehended with bated breath and beating heart, and with a sentiment of fear as long as conviction trembled in the balance. And the Apostle, on his part, conducts his argument as one that deals with minds in this state, unflinchingly, convincingly, yet withal considerately. The whole passage has an unmistakeable air of communicating something of the greatest importance, unfamiliar, unexpected. We suspect that the unsympathetic Gentile mind, missing the real importance of the communication, yet apprehending the spirit of importance that breathes in the whole passage, has been misled. Finding nothing in the real meaning of it to impress them deeply (for what was the Aaronic priesthood to them), Gentile readers sought a meaning that might correspond to the manifest air of importance pervading the communication, and thus have suspected meanings that would impress the *Gentile* mind with religious awe. It is from this source that traditional interpretations have come to us, and, as Gentiles still further removed in sympathy from the original readers of this epistle, we are exposed to the same misconception.

But a citizen of the United States may represent to himself the situation of those whom the Apostle addressed. Let him be one who believes that these United States were by the Federal Constitution bound up in a perpetual union; that the destinies of the country and all the proper aims of citizenship and bless-

ings of civil life must be realized in that union ; let him be a citizen that, on principle and with the utmost devotion of patriotism, made sacrifices and was fighting as a soldier, or commanding as an officer in the war to establish the Union against the formidable rebellion of disunion. Let such a one hear, from one having Apostolic authority, an argument that would successively take up the following positions and convincingly establish them as by the express declaration of the original framers of the Federal Constitution ; viz., that that constitution was not intended to be perpetual ; that a future emergence of distinct and separate confederacies was provided for ; that such a rearrangement of civil life was the aim of the confederate leaders ; and that the proper destinies of the populations of this continent and the best happiness of civil existence were to be attained in that way. Let such unfamiliar things appear to such a citizen, uttered by authority to which he must listen, and with convincing reasons to which he could only oppose his prejudices and likings and habits of thought, while he must admit their validity ; and he must listen with fear and trembling. On the other hand, his instructor, if endowed with Apostolic wisdom, would communicate the unfamiliar things with a moderation of manner that would leave them to make their impression by their naked simplicity. To complete the representation, let us suppose this discourse to be read by some citizen of one of the many nationalities of Europe, with no sympathy for the cause of Union here, and unable to think of a better social state than that presented by the political map of the continent of Europe. In the latter we would have one in much the situation we are in ourselves when reading this epistle. He might feel the sentiment of vital importance that breathed in the discourse. Its author might be one whose words he believed must be weighed with attention. But he would miss the real, thrilling interest of the communications. He might, likely, be misled to find meanings that, to him, would seem to correspond to the air of importance that marked the discourse, yet, would actually be quite foreign to what was the meaning of the Author and was the burning and focal interest to the readers he addressed.

Yet Christians now ought not to be strangers to the deep inter-

ests involved in this discourse concerning Jesus Melchizedek. We have an interest and inheritance in the Old Testament as a revelation, and in the Old Dispensation as part of the redemptive history. And the truth concerning the priesthood of Christ, as represented here, is not only truth for Jews. It is not only all Jews that Jesus the Melchizedek Priest is able to save to the uttermost who approach unto God by Him. It is all men. It was because God would establish a priesthood and raise up a priest to expiate sin for all men, that, as said in the Ps. cx., "the Lord hath sworn and will not repent; Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." It was because His purpose was as expressed in Psalm ii.: to give Christ a universal dominion. Roman citizenship was no less valuable to Paul than to the Centurion, because he was born such, and had not to buy it as the latter. And this Melchizedek Priest and his commandment are no less precious to a Gentile than to a Jew, though he does not, as the latter, take him in exchange for a priesthood and commandment that have been abrogated.

Ver. 26. **For such an high priest also¹ became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, removed from sinners, and become higher than the heavens.**

These words are taken by von Hofmann as constituting, with ver. 25, one sentence, in which: **For such an high priest became us** makes a parenthesis. According to this, the five predicates that follow continue the list that begins with: "ever liveth to make intercession for us." But the common view, that we have here a new sentence, is justified by the importance of the affirmation of the first clause: **For such an high priest also became us.** For it is important to note that the Apostle now resumes the title **high priest**, last applied to Jesus vi. 20. Having there called Him: "high priest after the order of Melchizedek," the Apostle has paused to represent the truth revealed concerning Christ, when, in Ps. cx. 4, He is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Having sufficiently done that (vii. 1-25), he resumes the title **high priest**, combining with it all the truth now ascertained as involved in the title Melchizedek, and affirms: **Such an high**

¹ Read καί with [L]; Tisch. viii.; Tr.; [W. & H.]; Lün., Alf., Del.

priest became us. Thus *τοιοῦτος* = **such** refers to all the preceding context of our chapter, and comprehensively applies it to the previous title **high priest**, with all that has been expounded (v. 1-10 ; vi. 19, 20) of the import of the latter title. We take *τοιοῦτος* as having this comprehensive reference in view of what has been remarked on the emphasis of the thought: "ever liveth" (ver. 25). The **For** of our verse connects directly with that statement, and **such** resumes particularly the notion: "ever liveth to make intercession." But that notion by its pre-eminence, and as the seal to all the other traits of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood, brings in all the rest, while it remains as the special subject for contemplation.

It is important to notice the precision with which the Apostle, in this context, uses the term **priest** and **high priest**. It is just, also, to acknowledge our indebtedness to von Hofmann. We may do this in the words of Delitzsch:¹ "Only Hofmann has discerned the set design with which the Author uses **priest** alone up to this point, and then proceeds: **such an high priest**, and shows how important this observation is for the understanding of the context." The failure on the part of many commentators to note this,² and their use of "priest" and "high priest" interchangeably with reference to what is taught (vii. 1-25) concerning Christ's Melchizedek priesthood, much confuses the sense. It is impossible to follow the discourse of the Apostle without confusion, unless we hold these two notions distinct, viz., Christ, a High Priest the antitype of the Aaronic high priesthood, and Christ a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And when the notions are combined in the title: "a high priest after the order of Melchizedek," they must be combined in their distinctness.

Such an high priest is the notion now presented, with special stress on the Melchizedek attributes that have been expounded, particularly that he remains a priest forever. Of this the Apostle affirms: He **also became us**. The *καί* = **also**, is emphatic. It

¹ On ver. 25.

² Comp. e. g. Calvin's *pontifex* and *sacerdotes*, vers. 26-28. Davidson, pp. 129, 143, 147, who does so deliberately.

suggests what has already been represented of Christ as the antitype of the Aaronic high priesthood, and of His fitness for us,¹ and declares that the Melchizedek attributes are **also** needed for our case. He **became us**, it is said. *Επερρεπεν, used ii. 10 to designate that which was meet or fitting for God to do on our behalf, is here repeated to designate what was meet or fitting for us to have in Him who should carry out the divine pleasure.² In the former case the reason is found in God. In the present it is found in ourselves. With particular reference to: "ever liveth to make intercession," it is our need as sinners that have sinned, do sin and will sin, and have a sinful posterity like ourselves.³

As we have found the reference of **such** to be backward to what has been represented of the Melchizedek order, we cannot⁴ take the five following predicates as in apposition with it; nor as a further unfolding of τοιοῦτος,⁵ which would be giving it a double reference backwards and forwards. These five predicates are to be taken in apposition with **high priest**. They "are selected characteristics"⁶ descriptive of Jesus as antitype of the Aaronic high priesthood, to which all that the Melchizedek title imports has now been superadded (καί). These predicates are not involved in the Melchizedek type. They *are* in the Aaronic, and are introduced as recapitulation of representations already made. As the antitype of the Aaronic high priest, *i. e.*, it must be noted, after the high priest had offered for his own sins, Jesus is ἅγιος = "(*sanctus*), godly-minded," **saintly**; ἄκακος = **guileless**, having no bad quality about Him; ἀμίαντος = **undefiled**, free from contamination that might attach to Him from an outward source; κεχωρισμένος κ. τ. λ. = "having been **removed from sinners**," which is further defined by: **and become higher than the heavens**. The first three of these predicates are obvious correspondences to the Aaronic high priests, only that the reality is affirmed of Christ, whereas in the others these things were only acquired ceremonially and symbolically. In the last two predicates the correspondence appears from a comparison of vi. 20, where Christ was last named

¹ iv. 14; x. 10.² Del.³ Comp. Rom. viii. 34; 1 John ii. 1.⁴ As *e. g.* de Wette.⁵ As Lün.⁶ Del.

High Priest, and said to have entered within the vail. That answers to the Aaronic high priest's entering into the Holiest. With that, Christ's removal from sinners took place. The greatness of that removal is indicated by here describing: "within the vail" to be: **higher than the heavens**. But this is not said to mark the greatness of Christ as distinguished from sinners. It is to intimate the greatness of the intercession. The high priest entered the Holiest to intercede for the people; and Christ is removed from sinners within the vail, to the highest heavens to do the same. As the Apostle has shown *how* in His Melchizedek attributes Christ ever lives to intercede, so now he shows *where* that intercession takes place, according to his Aaronic attributes. All which is most comforting to those who know that they have **such an high priest**.

The common habit of quoting the language before us in a perverted sense makes it important to call attention to its true meaning. **Separate from sinners** does not, in this context, mean free from being a party to sin with sinners; nor free from complicity with them; nor removed from their influence.¹ This would only express what the first three predicates have already adequately expressed. Nor does it mean that, above the heavens Christ is removed from the reach of the malice of sinners.² "It must be the sinfulness of sinners, and not their enmity against Him, that points the significance of His separation from them, and makes this worth mention here. This separation supplements His own sinlessness, not as if otherwise His holiness would be endangered, but so far as His active holiness is withdrawn from that relation to sin that formerly obtained in His case; He can now attend wholly to representing His own before God."³

This just interpretation, so evident when stated, must be a welcome correction to those who have understood "separated from sinners" in the erroneous ways noted above. It shows that believers themselves are the sinners from whom our High Priest is removed, and that the removal is for their benefit.⁴

The Apostle proceeds to mention a particular qualification in

¹ Against Calvin.

² Against Del.

³ von Hof.

⁴ Comp. John xiv. 28; xvi. 7.

our High Priest as now presented, that marks the inferiority of the high priests of the law. And note, that it is now of *high priest* and not priests that vers. 27, 28 speak. The Apostle now applies particularly to them inferences of the same nature as those he has above (vers. 18-25), applied to priests. It is this marks the progress of thought, without which we seem to have reiteration only, or we are misled to seek meanings that are not in the text.

Ver. 27. **Who hath not daily need, as the high priest, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, then for those of the people; for this he did once for all when he offered up himself.**

We may first dispose of a difficulty that appears in this verse. It seems to imply that the high priests **day by day** offered up sacrifices, first for their own sins, then for the people. The offering so described is evidently that which took place only once a year, on the great day of atonement. Without enumerating the various expedients proposed to obviate this difficulty,¹ we may give² what seems the best construction. A comparison with v. 1; ix. 17, 26; x. 1, 11, shows that the Author, by the offerings here described, can mean nothing else than what occurred only once a year. In x. 1, compared with x. 11, he shows that he clearly distinguishes between what high priests did once a year and what they did daily in sacrificing. He cannot, therefore, refer to the latter by the present expression, nor to both combined. Taking the present expression, then, to refer to the ritual for one yearly occasion, the facts of the case debar us from supposing he means that the high priests did that daily. We notice, then, that he does not write: *ὁς οὐκ ἔχει ἀνάγκην ὡσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ ἡμεῖς*; but: *ὁς οὐκ ἔχει καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνάγκην ὡσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*. Thus he does not say that the high priests offered every day; but of Jesus he says that He has not daily need so to offer sacrifices as the legal high priests. Moreover, it is not the Author's purpose here to affirm that Jesus is superior to the legal high priests in that *He* had *not* to do what *they* did. Were that the purpose, it would be enough to say so, and not be necessary to add that He did once for all what they did daily. It is,

¹ See, then, in Del., Lün., Alford.

² After von Hof.

therefore, incorrect to translate: "those (*οἱ*) high priests,"¹ as is done with the notion that such contrast is intended. The purpose is to affirm, that Jesus *needed not daily* to offer up sacrifices, as might be thought He must if He is ever, *i. e.*, daily, making intercession for His own.² As expressing the kind of sacrifice that His intercession required, that of the high priest on the great day of atonement is described. It *was* needed; and Jesus offered it.³ But He did it once for all, as his continued, unintermitted intercession shows.

What is affirmed in this verse is not with a view to showing how it is possible for Christ to be continually interceding. It does not do so, *e. g.*, by pointing to the fact that the high priests as sinful men needed, as often as they interceded, to make sacrifice, whereas Christ as sinless could make sacrifice once for all.⁴ What is affirmed is an inference from (*a*) the fact that He is a perpetual intercessor, which fact has been already proved from His Melchizedek character, according to which He is priest forever and ever lives; and (*b*) from the fact that He has entered within the vail, and there is and will continue to be. For He entered to stay there till the intercession shall no more be needed. The legal high priests needed only to sacrifice once for the yearly occasion of their entering the Holiest to intercede. But they could not stay there; and for the renewal of intercession renewed sacrifice was needed. All is different in the case of Christ, who "entered once for all into the holy place."⁵ Thus the present language is no appeal to the intrinsic worth of Christ's sacrifice, viz., a sacrifice of Himself, and he the Son, and of one without sin, as something that was sufficient once for all,⁶ however true such considerations are. Nor is it a dogmatic statement of this truth. The truth that *He made a sacrifice once for all is an obvious inference from the fact that He ever lives to make intercession, having made His sacrifice.*

In describing the sacrifice needful for intercession, "the Apostle uses the expression ἀναφέρειν, not προσφέρειν; and on purpose.

¹ Vers. 1611, 1881.² Comp. ix. 25, 26.³ v. 1-9.⁴ So de Wette, Lün.⁵ ix. 12.⁶ Against *e. g.* Chrys., Lindsay.

The complement of *προσφέρειν* is τῷ θεῷ;¹ of *ἀναφέρειν* it is ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον.² Thus the expression itself (*ἀναφέρειν*) precludes our understanding that the presentation of the blood of expiation in the Holiest of all is meant here. In *ἀναφέρειν* the offering is conceived of as a handing over, in that one gives his own away where it becomes God's own. In *προσφέρειν*, on the other hand, it is thought of as a handing in, in that one gives that God may receive. In the present case the former is used because the Author would designate the offering of Jesus as a self-surrender to that which happens with the offering. In this His self-sacrifice He did once for all what the legal high priests do when they first offer up sacrifice for their own sins, then for the sins of the people, and thus has not daily need to do it."³

That Christ did what corresponded to the legal high priests' performance in offering first for their own and then for the sins of the people, the Apostle has represented v. 1-9; and there as here it is meant that He did so in the way that was possible for one who was "without sin." The same objections are urged against this view⁴ here that are urged at v. 1-7. But the explanations given there obviate their consideration here.

When he offered up⁵ himself: "This is the first place in which the thought, that Christ is not only our high priest, but also the sacrifice for our sins, is quite clearly expressed. But the note, once struck, is continually sounded again."⁶

The contrast presented between Christ and the legal high priests, to the disadvantage of the latter, is now sharpened by a statement which, as the **For** shows, explains it.

Ver. 28. For the law appointeth men high priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was subsequent to the law, a Son perfected forever.

If both clauses of this verse were to be taken⁷ as referring to Christ, the first referring to what He is as antitype of the Aaronic

¹ Comp. *e. g.*, Num. xxxi. 50; Heb. xi. 4; Acts vii. 42.

² Comp. *e. g.*, Gen. viii. 20; Lev. iv. 10; James ii. 21 (1 Pet. ii. 24).

³ von Hof.

⁴ See Del.

⁵ We read ἀνενέγκας with the Rec.; W. and H.; Lün; v. Hof.; Del.; against προσενέγκας Tisch. viii.

⁶ Del.

⁷ with Ebrard.

high priesthood, and the second to what He is as Melchizedek priest, we must expect to read "a man,"¹ and not **men**. It is evident that a plurality of high priests is contrasted with the one Son, and their **infirmity** with His being **perfect forever more**; and the law by which they were instituted, with the oath that made the Son a priest.

The recurrence of the words "high priests," "appointed," "infirmity," "a Son," "perfect forever," as we find these in v. 1-10, shows that the Author deals with the same notions as there, and the words must have the same meaning. **Infirmity** is that which makes mere men liable and sure to sin, and also to death which ends their functions.² "The law which perfected nothing,"³ did not make the men free from this infirmity whom it appointed high priests. And the offering for their own sins according to law, left them still having infirmity. Hence the inferiority of the high priests expressed in ver. 27. **But the word of the oath which was subsequent to the law**, appointed a high priest of a superior kind, viz., **a Son perfected forever more**. The oath, and that it was subsequent to the law, which denotes that it established something that superseded whatever the law enacted to meet the same case; especially the express substance of the oath: "thou art a priest forever;" and then, that we see this verified in **a Son**, which brings in all that has been said of **a Son**⁴ who was perfected forever for his high-priestly functions; all this shows how in His very institution Christ is the "High Priest that became us,"⁵ and *that the legal high priests were not such*.

Let it be reiterated, that the point of what is said vers. 27, 28, is, that the contrast is now pressed between Christ as High Priest and the legal *high priests*, as previous to ver. 26, Christ's priesthood after the order of Melchizedek was contrasted with the legal *priesthood*. The progress of thought is, that what is true of the legal priesthood, involves also the legal high-priesthood and its efficacy. The common failure of expositors to mark the distinct purpose with which the Apostle speaks of priests and then of

¹ Comp. v. 1.² Comp. ii. 15; v. 2; vii. 23.³ ver. 19.⁴ i. 1-14. ii. 14; iii. 6; v. 8, 9.⁵ ver. 26.

high priests has led to great confusion here. It has led, as the division of chapters shows, to the supposition that our verses 26-28 are a conclusion of the foregoing representations that set forth the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical.¹ On the contrary, we have a fresh stadium of the Apostle's discourse. Recurring again to Christ's high-priesthood, which previous to vi. 20, he has illustrated in its *likeness* to the Aaronic high-priesthood, he now *distinguishes it from* the latter in respect to its *unlikeness*, i. e., its *superiority*. This he does on the ground of the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood as an order to the legal order of priesthood. As a topic so resumed, we are prepared to expect that the Author will not dismiss it with a brief word such as our vers. 26-28. And, accordingly, we find he does not, but proceeds to amplify the contrast between Christ as High Priest and the legal high priests, to the effect that the latter are wholly unable to meet the wants of sinners, while in additional details, he shows how Christ is the High Priest that became us.

VIII. 1. But a chief thing, besides those so-called [high priests] we have such an high priest, who sat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty, in the heavens 2. a minister of the Holies, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

It is to von Hofmann that we are indebted for observing the progress of thought in the context, and for the above translation of ver. 1, that it demands, and which has been treated too superciliously.² The construction is blamed with violently sundering κεφάλιον δέ from ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις. But it is evident that expositors who undertake to explain how they are to be combined, fail to do so satisfactorily. If they take the reference of κεφάλ. to the preceding context in the sense of "in brief," or "the chief thing," it would require to read: τὸ δὲ κεφάλιον τῶν εἰρημέγων. Nor can ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις be rendered: "in addition to what has been said." The difficulty is not in the ἐπί, but in the present participle. In order to do justice to the present participle, some render: "in what we are saying," or "say," or "concerning which we discourse,"³

¹ so e. g. Lün., who makes it the *fourth* mark of superiority.

² e. g., by Lün., Del., Alford.

³ Lün.; de Wette; Del.; Alford; Davidson; Vers. 1881.

without adducing elsewhere a corresponding example of such a combination of *κεφάλιον* *ᾀς*, or even showing the possibility of this adjunct, which as to substance, is superfluous, and as a matter of language, is obscure.”¹

We take *κεφάλιον* = **a chief thing**, with most expositors, and suppose the Author means, that in the high-priesthood of Christ, as here described, especially (ver. 2), that he is such an High Priest in the heavens, is seen the chiefest consequence of the contrast already established in general in regard to the orders of priesthood. We reject the rendering “the sum,” or “in brief,” because nothing that follows can properly be understood to represent the sum of anything that has been or is said. Thus *κεφάλ.* *ᾀς* is to be taken by itself, and *ἐπὶ τ. λεγομ.* connects with what follows; *ἐπὶ* having the meaning of **beside**,² or, it may be, of “along with,” as ix. 10, 17,³ which comes to the same thing here. To *τοῖς λεγομ.* = **the so-called**,⁴ supply *ἀρχιερεῶσιν* = “high priests;” which is natural, not only from the antithesis of **a high priest** presented in this verse, but also from that already presented in vii. 28. Were the *ἀρχιερεῶσιν* expressed,⁵ no one would challenge the propriety of the sentence or differ as to its meaning. To one that follows closely the logical connection with vii. 27, 28, its omission has no awkwardness. With this construction, what is said in ver. 1, is plain and needs no elucidation. Only we may venture to agree with those⁶ who suppose that *ἐκάθισεν* = **sat down**, expresses more than the mere fact of presence in heaven. As at i. 3, the same expression points a superiority to angels, so here it points a superiority to the earthly high priests. Yet, not that it expresses greater dignity as the privilege of Christ. It points a difference that makes Him a better high priest for us. It presents, under another expression, the Melchizedek characteristic of which so much has just been made, viz., Christ is a perpetual priest. *He has entered heaven to stay.* He is there always to do what He entered there to be and to do.

It may be remarked that so construed, ver. 1, even more than

¹ von Hof.

³ So von Hof.

⁵ Comp., 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

² Comp. Grimm., Lex., *sub. voc. n. d.*

⁴ Xen., Anab., I. ii. 13.

⁶ Alford, Davidson, etc.

ver. 4, (ὄντων τῶν προσφερόντων)¹ affords evidence that our epistle was written while the temple service was still maintained.

The Apostle, of course, does not mean that *we* have and are to have the high priests so called, *and* a high priest in the heavens. We have (*i. e.*, the readers had) both, but we see in the latter what must lead to the surrender of all trust in the efficacy of the former, because of what we see him to be, which for the present is denoted by *where* we see Him, viz., **in the heavens**, which has the emphasis.² He is **a minister of the Holies and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched not man**. In saying this, the Apostle interprets the meaning of the fact that Christ has “sat down at the right hand of the throne,” *i. e.*, is in heaven. The same thing has already, vi. 19, been interpreted as an “entering within the vail, a forerunner for us.” It completes the idea of Christ, a High Priest, ever living to intercede for His own. It represents Him as doing what a high priest in active discharge of his functions does; he **ministers**. He does this in the place and about the place where such ministry is discharged, viz., **the Holies**. But in His case it is in the heavens, where He has the functions and place that the legal high priests have on earth. As such the Apostle calls it **the true tabernacle**, not in distinction from a false, but from a tabernacle that was only the representation of the true.³

By von Hofmann, ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς is rendered as connected with τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός, because it is not *where* our high priest is, that is emphasized, but *where* He is our *high priest*, that is where He does high-priestly service. Thus **in the heavens** has an emphasis. In defense of the construction he says:

“It is objected that, ἐν τ. οὐραν. makes no proper beginning of a sentence, which is something I do not understand; or that the rythmical balance of vers. 1 and 2 would thereby be marred, whereas just the contrary is true; or that it must then read: τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν τ. οὐραν., whereby the expressive emphasis of the ἐν τ. οὐραν. would disappear; or that it is understood as a matter of course that the sanctuary where Christ ministers is the heavenly one, if He has sat down at the right hand of God, whereas even

¹ Comp. Lün.² von Hof.³ Lün., von Hof.

$\tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ is not without its clause of exacter definition,¹ which some² then would have supplied to $\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\nu$. As $\tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ has its exacter definition [$\tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\nu\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$] on which rests the emphasis, so, also, must $\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\nu$ have something that is emphasized marking antithesis. The legal high priest is minister of the Holies, but on earth; and a minister of the Tabernacle is he also, but not of the true tabernacle." This exposition justifies us in accepting the construction in question.³ But, while assenting to that, we may refuse to follow the opinion,⁴ that the Apostle signifies different things by **the Holies in the heavens** and **the true tabernacle**. They are synonomous,⁵ in the sense that they designate the locality where our high priest ministers. The two are one as Pharaoh's two dreams were one. They emphasize the contrast between the earthly locality where the legal high priest ministers, and the heavenly where our High Priest ministers. The view, that by **the true tabernacle** is meant the glorified body of Christ,⁶ is in conflict with the parallel pointed above, that the legal high priest is minister of a tabernacle, but not the true tabernacle. The tent where Christ ministers must be as objective to him as the tent where the legal high priest ministers is to the latter. The notion that the Apostle means different, though closely related things by **the Holies** and the **tent**, rests upon the assumption that by $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\alpha$ = Holies, he means "Holy of holies." But at ix. 2, he expressly defines the Holies to be the anterior tent. At that place we shall find, that he uses the same word in that context with only that meaning; and that nothing there justifies the notion that a Holy of holies, as distinguished from a Holies, has any existence in the arrangements of the heavenly sanctuary.

If we have properly understood the scope of vers. 1, 2, viz., that it is to point with emphasis to the heavens as the place where Christ is High Priest and so ministers, then the vers. 3, 4, are meant to show why the sphere of His high-priestly ministry *must* be heaven.⁷ This explains the logical connection expressed by

¹ Against Lün., and Del.² *e. g.*, Bleek, Ebrard, Lün., etc.³ Against Alford.⁴ Of von Hof., Del., Owen, Alford.⁵ So Lün.⁶ Owen, von Hof., Alford.⁷ Comp. Del.

For. The argument, like that of v. 1-5, is an inference from what is true of every high priest to what must therefore be true of Christ. The premise for the inference is :

Ver. 3. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; whence it [is] necessary also for this one to have something which he offers.

The identity of the language of the first clause of our verse with v. 1, sounds like reiteration for the purpose of resuming the representation concerning Christ as High Priest where it was broken off at v. 10. That representation only amplifies the part of Christ's ministry that corresponds to what every high priest did when he offered for himself in view of his own infirmities, before offering for the people's sins. What Christ did to correspond to the latter offering was mentioned in a summary way without interpretation: "and having been perfected he became the author of everlasting salvation to those that obey Him, having been saluted by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 9, 10).

In resuming his topic vi. 20, after the digression v. 11—vi. 19, the Apostle elaborated the truth implied in Christ's being saluted high priest *after the order of Melchizedek*. This he has just concluded vii. 28, by the declaration: "The law appointed men priests having infirmity, but the word of the oath that was subsequent to the law, a Son perfected forever." We observe that this expression comes round again to that of v. 9, 10. This is true not only of "perfected" and "Melchizedek," but also of the "infirmity" of the earthly high priests which, at v. 7, 8, was interpreted as it found correspondence in Christ. It is our perfected High Priest, viz., our High Priest in his Melchizedek character, that is presented as the topic in vers. 1, 2. As the passages just quoted show, it is our High Priest with infirmities laid aside, and now perfected forever. It is now in place to interpret what He does that corresponds to the earthly high priests' ministry when offering gifts and sacrifices for the sins of others *after* having first offered for themselves. And this is what, from the present on to x. 18, the Apostle actually does. Noticing these things, we may assume that the first clause of our

ver. 3 is actually intended for what we have said it sounds like. It is reiteration in brief of v. 1, for the purpose of resuming the representation of the correspondence in our high priest to what is true of every high priest, and interpreting that which was left uninterpreted. It is needless to say that the progress of thought just noted serves to corroborate the interpretation of v. 7, 8, given above.

Appealing, then, to what is true of every high priest, viz., that he is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, the inference is established that Christ must have the same functions. The meaning now is, **offering gifts and sacrifices** for the sins of the people and as ministering for them. In regard to **gifts and sacrifices**, we may refer to what was said in explanation under v. 1. In regard to *προσφέρειν*, we see from the context that it refers to something Christ does in heaven, and, thus, that the *προσφ.* of the earthly high priests must correspondingly be what they do in the earthly Holies. We observe, then, a propriety in the use of *προσφέρειν* here, instead of *ἀναφέρειν* as used vii. 27, consistent with the different significations of the words that were explained there. The **offering** here does not mean offering up sacrifice, but what was done when sacrifice had been offered. And the double expression **offer gifts and sacrifices** requires us to think of something more, if not something else than presentation of the sacrifice to God. As a matter of fact and observation, we notice in the progress of the epistle, that neither in what he says of Christ, nor by what he says of the earthly high priests, does the Apostle actually express or imply that Christ offers His sacrifice to God in heaven, or offers His blood there. He enters heaven by His own blood, as the high priest enters the Holies by other blood not His own.¹ He offers Himself for us in the presence of God in the Holies not made with hands, as the earthly high priest offers himself for the people in the earthly Holies.² As the copies of the heavenly things were cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood, so (the Apostle lets us infer his meaning) the heavenly things themselves are cleansed by the sprinkling of His blood.³ Such are the expressions that help us to give precision

¹ ix. 12.² ix. 24.³ ix. 23.

to the Apostle's meaning when he speaks of our High Priest needing to have something to offer. What is clear here is, that it is affirmed, that an offering is essential to our High Priest, as to every high priest. It is equally clear that the present expression does not mean that Christ offers up a sacrifice in heaven, and the present text is of no use in itself for the Romish doctrine of the "unbloody sacrifice." Nor does our expression intimate that Christ makes continual sacrifice in heaven. What is clearly affirmed is sufficient for the Apostle's argument, which is meant to corroborate the representation of vers. 1, 2, that Christ is our High Priest in heaven. It is the first premise to show that He *must* minister there. He must have something to offer, that is first premise. The second is, He cannot do this on earth. That it must be in heaven follows as the consequence. The second premise is presented in the form of showing why He cannot so minister on earth.

Ver. 4. **If then he were on earth he would not even be priest, there being those who offer gifts according to law.**

There is no such emphasis here as though it were said: he would not be even a priest, let alone high priest.¹ But priest is the genus, and denying that excludes all priestly character whatever. The Apostle recognizes that the legal priests were the ones to do priestly ministry on earth, and no others. As they did this **according to law**, it would be against law for another to minister in a priestly way on earth. This excluded Christ from doing so, and thus, were He on earth, He were no interceding priest. Hence, when prepared (**perfected**) by the necessary sacrifice, He entered heaven, there to minister.

It is profitable to remark, that if this reasoning is true for Christ, it is equally so for any other. This text, therefore, excludes the notion of the Christian ministry being a priesthood for God's people. The disciple is not greater than his Lord.

To be a priest, and thus a high priest, actually ministering as Intercessor, Christ must be away from earth, *i. e.*, in the heavens, as represented vers. 1, 2.

To the statement of the exclusive right of the legal priests to

¹ Against Lün., Del.; with Davidson.

minister on earth, the Apostle adds a representation description of their ministry.

Ver. 5 *a*. **Who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned when about to make the tabernacle.**

Λατρεύειν means **serving**,¹ or being the servants of the objects expressed in the datives.

This is said to enhance the notion of the exclusive right and dignity of their service,² and not to mark its inferiority to the ministry of Christ in the true tabernacle.³ Not in contrast with the sanctuary where Christ ministers, but in contrast with every other earthly sanctuary, the Apostle affirms that what the legal priests serve is **the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**.⁴ Therefore nowhere on earth but where that copy is can there be a priestly ministry, and no other on earth but the legal priest can do priestly work. Thus the reason introduced by **for** ver. 3 is completed.

That the legal sanctuary was such a copy of the heavenly things the Apostle proves by a reference to Exod. xxv. 40, introduced by : **For, saith He**, meaning God so said to Moses.

Ver. 5 *b*. **For see, saith he, thou shalt make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount.**

Here it is probable that the *ᾶρα* = **see** is not meant in the sense of "see to it;" but, like the original Hebrew (וַיַּרְא וַיַּעַשׂ), it means : **see and make** (*ποιεῖς*) as was shewed there.⁵ What Moses saw was itself a type of the things in heaven. What he made was a shadow of a shadow.⁶

Having set before the reader the chief thing resulting from Christ's being high priest after the order of Melchizedek, viz., that beside the so-called high priests we have "*such*" an high priest in the heavens and ministering there; and having shown that He could not be a priest on earth consistently with ordinances that were of God's appointment, the Apostle proceeds to affirm that the ministry he has is (*δυνατοτέρως*)⁷ more excellent than, as well as different from that which the priests discharged

¹ Comp. xiii. 10.

² von Hof.

³ Against Lün., Del.

⁴ So von Hof.

⁵ So von Hof. Comp. Büttm. Gram. p. 242.

⁶ Alford.

⁷ Comp. i. 4.

on earth. The $\delta\epsilon$ of ver. 6 answers to the $\mu\epsilon\nu$ of ver. 4. The **now** is logical, not temporal, and introduces a statement. "It means as things in fact are."¹

Ver. 6. **But now hath he obtained a more distinguished ministry by as much as he is also mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.**

To the thing affirmed is conjoined a reference to fact in proof. The present reasoning appears to some a mere *vice versa* of vii. 20-22, if not a case of actually reasoning in a circle, viz., that as in vii. 20-22 the Author proves the superiority of the covenant from the greater rank of the priest, so here he infers the superior rank of His priestly ministry from the greater excellence of the covenant of which He is the Mediator.² But we found, at vii. 20-22, that the thing proved was, that the covenant was better than the law because of the perpetuity guaranteed to it by the priest, in that he is a priest forever. What is proved here is that our high priest has a **more distinguished or excellent ministry** because of the betterness of the covenant of which he is Mediator. To prove the betterness of the covenant as perpetual from the forever-priesthood of the surety, and to prove the betterness of the priestly ministry from the contents of the covenant that determines that ministry, is not reasoning in a circle, nor is it a case of mere *vice versa*. The enduring greatness of Great Britain makes a protectorate by her better than one assumed by France. Whatever it is, it is sure to last. On the other hand, the terms of the compact, by which Great Britain exercises her protectorate, may make Great Britain's administration of the protectorate the beneficent thing. The latter illustrates the Apostle's meaning here, where Christ's high-priestly ministry is compared with the high priests so-called. Beside the place, viz., the heavens, where He ministers, which has been mentioned, the Apostle appeals to the intent and effect of that ministry. It is expressed in a covenant, and Christ is the **Mediator** of that covenant, which means not only that He gives it effect, but also that to give it effect is the special function of His ministry. And that He is the Mediator of the covenant in question marks a

¹ Davidson.

² So Lün.

point of His superiority to the legal high priests, who were not the mediators of the legal covenant, but only the ministers under it.¹ The special quality of betterness in the covenant referred to is mentioned. It is **enacted on better promises**. The comparison is with the covenant given through Moses.²

The terms used here show that it is no covenant in the sense of an agreement between parties. It proceeds only from one, viz., God, and is determined by Him. It determines the relations that are to be between Him who gives it and those who have the benefit of it. Hence the propriety of the expression *νενομισθηται* = **is enacted**, though the covenant conveys promises. **Promises**, in the plural refers to the particulars of the promise cited from Jer. xxxi. 31–34, as found below, vers. 10–12.

Having said that the covenant that determines Christ's high-priestly ministry is better than the one under which the legal high priests ministered, the Apostle justifies the assertion.

Ver. 7. For if that first was faultless, then would not place have been sought for a second.

This is not intended to show wherein the second is better³ nor is the following passage from Jeremiah adduced to show this, though it contains what does show it: "The Apostle only justifies his having said that it is better. For he only says, if there had been nothing to object to the former, then there would not have been sought place for a second. And this expression does not unconsciously blend two different statements: *οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο*, and *δευτέρας οὐκ ἦν ἂν τόπος*;⁴ but it is intentionally so constructed in order to say that, after the first assumed its place, where, as instituted by God, it stood by right, a second could not otherwise find room, unless there were another place not occupied by the first, where it might come to stand, which was only possible if it would accomplish something that the other did not. But that in the Scriptures room is actually sought for a second, the Apostle proves by citing Jer. xxxi. 31–34. He introduces the citation by :

¹ Comp. Del

² See Exod. vi. 1–8; and comp. our ver. 9.

³ Against Lün., Alford.

⁴ "A second would not have been sought," and "there was no place for a second;" against Ebrard; Lün.

Ver. 8. (a). **For finding fault with them, he saith:**

It is erroneously supposed that the Apostle proceeds to prove his statement that the first covenant was not without fault, whereas **For** can only connect with the second and not the first clause of ver. 7. And this error led to a second, in which *αὐτοῖς* is joined to *λέγει*¹ instead of to *μεμφόμενος*, as its position requires,² although it is admitted that it is then useless. Just this is significant for the Apostle, that in a context of the Scripture which is cited as God's written word, where God reproaches those put under the first covenant with their unfaithfulness, He does not declare His purpose to maintain that covenant, but that he will give another, and of a different sort."³

Ver. 8. (b). **Behold there come days, saith the Lord, and I will accomplish upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah a new covenant, 9. not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day of my taking their hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt, for they remained not in my covenant, and I neglected them, saith the Lord. 10. For [But] this is the covenant that I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, putting my laws into their mind, and upon their heart will I write them, and I will be to them for God, and they shall be to me for a people. 11. And they shall not teach each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying: Know the Lord; for [but] all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them. 12. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more.**

As has been said, this lengthy citation is made in proof of just one point, which, also, the Author clinches by the comment of ver. 13. The passage does not, therefore, call for any comment in detail, but only that we should note wherein it is proof in point. Let the following observations make the pointedness clearer. "First, it is to be noted that: **For (ἐν) they remained not in my covenant and I neglected them, saith the Lord (ver 9 b.)** forms a parenthesis, consisting of a premise and conclusion; then second, that the following *ἐν* (ver. 10), as the *ἔ* of the original text, being opposed to the foregoing negative sentence, has the

¹ See *e. g.* de Wette, Lün.; Bleek, Kurtz.

² Comp. 2 Macc. ii. 7.

³ von Hof.

force of a 'but'; and finally, third, that the same is true of the *ῥῆτι* (ver. 11) that opposes the **all shall know me**, to the foregoing negative; that on the other hand *ῥῆτι* (ver 12) in : **For I will be merciful to their iniquities** belongs to the total promise as assigning a reason, and not to the **all shall know me** alone and particularly, with which it would stand in no immediate connection as a reason. Did Jehovah not forgive his people what they had sinned under the law, he would not enter into this new relation with them here described. The establishment of this new order of things is the actual proof of his forgiving their sins, and the forgiveness makes the new order possible. Because he proposes to forgive His people, he makes room for the establishment of a relation to Him which is not subject, as the former, to be disturbed by sinning, because the law of their life is no more outwardly prescribed, but is inscribed in their hearts. But the Apostle meant neither the forgiveness of sins nor the inwardness of the law, when he mentioned the promises, with reference to which the divine dispensation that Jesus mediated for the Christian is made the law of the Church.¹ For the establishment of the latter just consist in this, that God gets Himself a Church that carries His will in the heart, and the promises must be just as distinct from this new legislation as they were distinguished from that of Moses. As the latter promised the people that they should be God's people in the Holy Land if they kept God's law, so here the Church that makes His will their will is promised everlasting life, which ix. 15 is called 'the promise of the eternal inheritance.' The Scripture citation is not for the purpose of saying what are the better promises of the new divine dispensation, but only to prove that room is sought for a new and different dispensation. Accordingly, having made the citation, the Apostle merely adds :"²

Ver. 13. **In that he saith : A new [covenant] he hath made the first old. But that which becometh old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.**

This conclusion is drawn so forcibly that comment can only weaken its impression. We give the usual rendering. Yet the

¹ Against Bleek, de Wette, Lün., Kurz, etc.

² von Hof.

language of the Apostle appears even more expressive, if we take the admissible rendering of von Hofmann: **But that which becomes antiquated also grows aged, nigh to vanishing away.** "It is common to take τὸ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον together as subject of ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ. But the foregoing sentence yields only the subject τὸ παλαιούμενον; and παλαιῶσθαι and γηράσκειν are distinguishable notions. Παλαιόν is something whose time is gone by; γηράσκον what has its end in view. Thus the latter signifies the same as ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ that is added assyndetically as explanatory, and is like its predicate, and thus καί, as in 2 Tim. iii. 16, is not "and" but also.¹

In the foregoing chapter the Apostle has emphasized (κεφάλαιον) that Jesus, being such an high priest as the Melchizedek attributes make Him, is a minister in heaven, which the Apostle calls the Holies, the true tent, which God pitched, not man, (viii. 1, 2). Following this with considerations that show why the high priestly ministry of Jesus must not be on earth (viii. 3-5), he affirms the difference and superiority of His ministry, viz., that He is mediator of a new and better covenant than the old (viii. 6), adding proof of the fact from prophecy that foretold the event (viii. 7-13).

In chapter ix. he considers details comprehended in the contrasts of the foregoing chapter. The two covenants, the two places of discharging the ministry that the covenants demand, viz., in heaven and on earth, the ministry itself of the so-called high priests and of our High Priest; such are the subjects, with the aim of showing that the priestly ministry under the old covenant must yield to that of the new. As in treating of Melchizedek, so here, the Author begins with "the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God."

IX. 1. Now indeed the first [covenant] had also ordinances of service and the worldly sanctuary.

It is obvious that "covenant"² is to be supplied here, because the covenants have just been the subject of extended remark and of contrast with each other. What is affirmed here is with a

¹ von Hof.

² σκηνή = "tent" of the Recept. is rejected.

tone of concession,¹ and the *καί* = **also**, expresses that what is conceded to the first covenant is what has been affirmed of the second. This refers us to viii. 2, and requires us to have in view what was there affirmed.² The concession, however, is introduced by *μὲν* = **indeed**, that prepares the reader for a following : **but**, which we accordingly find at ver. 6,³ and where considerations are pressed that detract from the seeming importance of the concessions.⁴ The Apostle does not seek to make an impression by understating the facts. He lets them have the benefit of their full value. The **service** in question were identified with the first covenant, and as such they were **ordained**, *i. e.*, were *juris divini*. There was also **the sanctuary**, with its **worldly** character, which means the same as is meant viii. 4 by "on earth."⁵ If what is affirmed is in the tone of concession, we need not suppose that **worldly** is added in the way of detraction, as reminding that it was only temporal.⁶ It is rather reiteration of the sentiment of viii. 4, 5, as explained above. It is no reason why the Author should not affirm here that the first covenant had a worldly sanctuary, that he has so recently affirmed it viii. 5; and this can be no reason for taking *τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν*, not as object, but as a correlative subject with *ἡ πρώτη*.⁷ The same reasoning would apply to *δικαιώματα λατρείας*, for that reiterates the *ὑπὸ τῶν πρὸς φερόντων κατὰ νόμον τὰ δῶρα*.

The Author proceeds in the same spirit of concession to describe the tabernacle with its contents, disguising none of the glory.

Ver. 2. **For a tabernacle was prepared, the first, in which [are] the candlesticks and the table, and the setting forth of the loaves; which is called Holies. 3. But after the second vail, a tabernacle which is called Holy of holies; 4. having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, in which [is] a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, 5. and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally.**

¹ Lün., Del., von Hof., Lindsay.

² Lün., Del., von Hof.

³ von Hof.

⁴ With Angus; against Lün., Del., von Hof.

⁵ Against Lindsay.

⁶ Lün.

⁷ Against von Hof.

It is out of place to comment on the things here enumerated. That belongs to Old Testament exegesis. It is only important to notice the Author's manner of mentioning them. It is expedient to supply "are" and "is," instead of "were" and "was" (vers. 4, 7),¹ because it is consonant with λέγεται, ἔχουσα (*bis*), κατασκευάζοντα, and because the Author's farther discourse ver. 6, so uses the present tense; in what way will be there explained. The Author's intention of disguising none of the glory of the things pertaining to the first covenant appears in enumerating so many of them, and only stopping because time does not permit him to extend the list; and in his mentioning that **the incense altar**, was all overlaid with gold, that **the pot was gold**, that **the rod budded**, and in calling the cherubim, **cherubim of glory**, by which is meant cherubim that bear the divine glory.²

It has been charged that the Author here represents that **the incense altar** was behind the vail, *i. e.*, in the Holy of holies,³ whereas it was in the anterior tent called in ver. 2, **the first tabernacle**. From this supposed ignorance there have been inferences drawn as to the person of the Author, *e. g.*, that he was not familiar with the Temple, but drew his picture from reading the Old Testament,⁴ or that he was no Jew of Palestine.⁵ It is to obviate this difficulty that many translate θυμιατήριον, "censer."⁶ But the word means **incense altar**,⁷ and we must explain the Author's mention of it consistently with that. The difficulty vanishes under a careful inspection of what the Author precisely says, as appears in the following reproduction of the comment of von Hofmann.⁸

It reads χρυσῶν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον, the tent that was behind the second vail had such an altar. We read the same in 1 Kings vi. 22. (Not indeed in the LXX, where the whole passage is badly mixed. But, that the Author was only acquainted with the LXX

¹ Versions of 1611, 1881.

² Hammond, de Wette, Ebrard, Del., von Hof., comp. Ezek. ix. 3: x. 4.

³ de Wette, Lün.

⁴ Lün.

⁵ Bleek in Del.

⁶ So the versions of 1611, 1881; Vulg., Stuart, Lindsay, comp. Alford's full notes.

⁷ See Del., Davidson.

⁸ comp. Ebrard.

and not with the original text, is an assertion that we have already found to be erroneous). There it reads: "the altar that belonged to the oracle," (אֹשֶׁר-לְרֹבִי). How does it come that the narrator mentions there the gilding of this altar immediately before he speaks of images of the cherubim, and in a connection that relates entirely to the Holy of holies, if he did not regard it as belonging to the Holy of holies? It is, moreover, significant that Ex. xxx. 6, says of the incense altar: "Thou shalt put it before the vail which is by [over] the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, (לִפְנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת), and again Ex. xl. 5, after directions about bringing the table and the candlestick into the tabernacle, we read: "Thou shalt set the altar of gold for incense before the ark of the testimony" (לִפְנֵי אֲרוֹן), and afterwards, (ver. 6), "Thou shalt set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting (לִפְנֵי קִדְשׁ מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד). As the altar of burnt offering belongs to the tabernacle before which it stands, so does the incense altar belong to the Holy of holies before which it stands. As the Author does not mean to give an exact description of the sanctuary, but treats of its arrangement with reference to its service, he separates the incense altar from the furniture of the Holies, and joins it to the Holy of holies whose altar it is, and to which it belongs on account of the nature of its service. It is objected that μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα distinguishes as clearly as possible between the things represented as found in the Holies and those found in the Holy of holies; and ἑχουσα referring to θυμιατήριον has the same meaning as when used in reference to σπάγμος χρυσῆς, for both which the ἐν ἡ, referring to τῇν κιβωτόν, determines the sense.¹ But it completely turns the force of this objection to be reminded that when a hollow vessel *e. g.*, a pot, is said to have something, it is understood, as a matter of course, that what it has is inside of it; though even then it would not be true of its lid or handle. What a thing has, it has in that way that it is possible to have it from the nature of the thing. To use Ebrard's illustration, a store has a sign, and has goods for sale among its belongings; the former is outside, and the latter

¹ Lün.

are inside. And so the Holy of holies, says the Author, has an incense altar and the ark. The second veil divides tent from tent, not the belongings of one tent from the belongings of the other. Did the Author say ἐν ᾗ χρὸς, θύμ., = "in which is the incense altar," as he says, "in which is the golden pot;" and as he describes the contents of the Holies there would be such an error as is charged on him. But his choosing to say ἔχουσα = **having**, which can have its appropriate, yet different sense as applied to the incense altar and to the ark, is evidence of his perfect knowledge of the facts of the case.

The difficulty, thus explained away, is plainly of their own making who entertain it as serious. It may be taken as a very perfect example of the alleged discrepancies to which appeal is made by those who ascribe inspiration to the sacred writers, yet impute to them erroneous statements of facts, even in matters where the statement of facts is their particular purpose. Were the Author guilty of the error charged on him in this instance, it would be a complete case of discrepancy; for he would be in immediate conflict with himself. For he could not be ignorant that the high priests were directed to burn incense on the incense altar *twice every day*. This direction is found Exod. xxx. 7, 8, immediately after the directions for setting the incense altar before the veil. Yet in our ver. 7, the Author represents how the high priests entered the Holy of holies only *once a year*, and thus, according to his alleged error, could never approach the incense altar oftener. What sort of an idea can one have of the intelligence of a writer, not to say of his inspiration, who admits such ignorance and glaring inconsistency in him? This thought impresses one still more gravely, when the same persons are found to treat superciliously solutions that are as satisfactory as the foregoing. As Ebrard says: why do not such expositors take the final step and accuse our Author of being ignorant that the Tabernacle no longer existed! For that inference they have all the present tenses here.

We may treat more briefly, drawing from Ebrard, the difficulty that is made of the Author's representation that **the pot of manna** and **Aaron's rod** were **inside the ark of the covenant**. The objec-

tion¹ is, that according to Exod. xvi. 33 sq.; Num. xvii. 25; 1 Kings viii. 9, these articles were not laid *in* the ark, but only *before* or *alongside* of it. But as the ark was the only hollow vessel within the space of the Holy of holies; and as there is no intimation of there being any shelf there, and a niche was impossible in walls made of hangings, one would infer *a priori* that these articles were placed in the ark along with the tables of the covenant. This inference, however, is not needed. For in Exod. xvi. 33, 34; Num. xvii. 25, it is expressly said, that these articles were laid לפני העדות = "before the *testimony*." Expositors² have yet to show the text wherein the ark is designated by ערת. This word is everywhere the designation for the Decalogue, or tables of the law, which, as is well known, lay in the ark. What was to be laid before the testimony would be laid where the testimony lay.² When one says he has laid his condenser by the microscope, every one understands that both are laid in the same box.

In the foregoing description of the worldly sanctuary, the Apostle contemplates the structure as described in the Pentateuch, without any reference to the Temple as it was in the past, or may have been when our epistle was written. Having now described it, doing full justice to the glory of it, he proceeds with: **But**, to point to what marked its imperfection.

Ver. 6. But these things having been so prepared, into the first tent indeed, the priests enter continually, accomplishing the services; 7. but into the second the high priest alone once in the year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

It is erroneous to suppose that the $\delta\epsilon$ of ver. 6 has nothing to do with the $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ of ver. 1, and thus to translate it "now."³ This $\delta\epsilon$ brings in an antithesis to the matter introduced by the foregoing $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$; hence, it is to be translated "but."⁴ It is not, indeed, the most striking antithesis that is found in Christ, which is represented ver. 11 sqq.; but it is something preliminary to that, viz., the imperfection of the services ordained for the

¹ By Bleek, in Ebrard.

³ As Del., Eng. Vers. 1611, 1881.

² So also von Hof.

⁴ Lün., von Hof.

worldly sanctuary. Before presenting the antithesis of what our true High Priest is, the Apostle would show how, by its very character, the worldly sanctuary represented that it was for a period of imperfection.

In describing the use made of the tabernacle that was so prepared, the Apostle uses the present tense (*εἰσίσαιεν, προσφέρει*). This is not to be ascribed to the fact that such services were performed at the time of writing this epistle, and that we find in this a reference to the existing temple service, and thus a hint of the date when our epistle was written.¹ "The present time in which the Apostle's discourse moves, is not some past time, nor his own time, nor an ever continuing present, but a present time as it is there in the word of God, where is to be read how the sanctuary prepared by Moses is constructed, and what priests and high priest do in it. Into the anterior tent the priests go continually; but into the posterior the high priest alone once a year, that is, on the one hand, only then, and on the other, ever again yearly, and, indeed, not without blood that he offers for himself and the errors of the people,² for whom atonement is thus needed afresh."³ The Apostle's representation here has specially to do with *the use made of the tabernacle* that was so prepared. It is not the services themselves to which he directs our notice. His representation calls us to notice the difference in the use of the anterior and posterior parts of it, the first tent and the second: and the *μὲν—δὲ* = *indeed—but*, mark again antithesis. The first called the Holy place (ver. 2), was used daily and freely by the priests in ministering. The second called Holy of holies (ver. 3), was used only once a year, the high priest alone entering there, and that not freely (*οὐ χωρὶς ἁγιατοῦς*) but after special atonement both for himself and for the people. This contrast marks the second tent as an inaccessible place. That it was so entered as it was, expresses this more than if it were never entered at all. For it represents that there was a use for it, whereas, were it never entered it would express uselessness. But used as it was, under such restrictions, it expressed a place and presence

¹ Against Lün., Lindsay.

² Comp. Lev. i. 5; vii. 33.

³ von Hof.; comp. Davidson.

that was for the present unapproachable. **The services** (*λατρείας*) of the priests that were discharged daily, were the morning and evening offering of incense, the attention to the lamps and the disposition of the shew bread.¹ The Apostle seems to confine the notion of **services** mentioned ver. 1, to what was done in the anterior tent. For here he only repeats the mention of them in that connection. What the high priest does in the Holy of holies is described in terms of its own that seem to distinguish it from what is meant by **services**. It confirms the thought that he means by services only the things above mentioned, when we notice that in his enumeration of the furniture of the Holies he mentions only the lamps and the table, and omits the altar of sacrifice. The point of the present statement is, that while the Holies was freely accessible to the ministers of divine worship, the Holy of holies was unapproachable.

This was significant, and the Apostle gives the interpretation of it in a subjoined participial sentence.

Ver. 8. **The Holy Spirit showing this, that the way of the Holies hath not been manifested, while the first tent still is standing.**

The Author chooses to say : **the Holy Spirit manifests**, instead of : we are taught, or : we see, or the like ; because he would claim divine authority for the radical truth here exhibited. It is the same present time as meant in vers. 6, 7, that is meant here again by the present tense (*δηλοῦντος, ἐχούσης*). It is the whole present phenomenon of the tabernacle and its priestly services that exhibits the truth now formulated. It is the Holy Spirit effective in these that makes the truth exhibited by them the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle assumes that his readers agree with himself in regarding the tabernacle and its appointed services as the work of the Holy Spirit, seeing they were in existence by virtue of the word of scripture that the Holy Spirit inspired. Therefore the truth they exhibited was truth revealed by the Holy Spirit. All which is significant of what is to be believed concerning the inspiration of scripture.

As to what is made manifest, let it be noted, that **the way of**

¹ Del. ; Lün.

the holies means the way to the Holies (comp. LXX., Gen. iii. 24; Jer. ii. 18; Matt. x. 5). Moreover, **the Holies** here does not mean the Holy of holies, or posterior tent of which the Apostle has been speaking. This has been commonly so understood.¹ But when an author defines his terms so precisely as is done in vers. 2, 3, it is inadmissible that what is called in ver. 3 ἅγια ἁγίων = "Holy of holies, should here be designated ἅγια = **Holies**, when, ver. 2, this word has been applied to the anterior tent. Neither can the Apostle by **the Holies** in this verse mean the anterior tent as he does in verse 2. He says here: **the way of the Holies was not manifested**; and there is no conceivable sense in which that can be understood of the anterior tent. Our context itself represents the latter in the very contrary light. What misleads readers here is, that they suppose the meaning of: **the Holies** is determined by the mention of **the first tent**. It is, however, to viii. 2 we must refer for its meaning.² There the Apostle has named and described what is for him the Holies or sanctuary. It is the true Holy place where God is, and which is referred to again x. 20 in the expression: "entrance into the Holy place." The way to this has not been made plain while the anterior tent stands by virtue of the word of scripture. By **the first tent** is meant the same as in ver. 2, and not the first in point of time,³ nor yet that this expression should here be taken to mean the entire worldly tabernacle.⁴ The anterior tent is named without reference to the posterior, because in it alone were the services discharged that represented the relation the people had to God and the degree of access to God that they enjoyed. While that, in its quality as a first tent contrasted with a second that was an exclusively divine place, was the place where they could freely and daily enter (by priestly mediation), and there stood the Holy of holies from which all were excluded, there was the standing exhibition of the truth that the way to the real sanctuary of God's presence was not made manifest. "Furthermore, ἔτι does not mean 'during the time that,' or 'so long as.' " *Ἐτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν* expresses the reason for what

¹ e. g., Del., Ebrard, Davidson.

² Against Lindsay.

³ von Hof.

⁴ Against Calvin, etc.

is said not to be, and not the measure of the time during which it is not to be, since it must be said, wherein one may know that the way of the Holies is not yet revealed. By this, that the anterior tent still stands, thus that the house of God is so constituted, may one, who understands the mind of the Spirit, be aware that the way thither where God is, is not yet revealed; for those belonging to the house of God it does not yet exist."¹

In viii. 2 the Apostle refers to heaven where Christ is with God as "the Holies, the true tabernacle"—without distinction of a Holy place and a Holy of holies.² There is no such distinction either there or here, or in ver. 12. Escaping the misapprehension of his meaning in the words before us, we shall see how gratuitous are the efforts of expositors to explain in what sense the Apostle finds in Christ's entering the heavenly Holies a parallel to the earthly high priest passing through the Holies into the Holy of holies.³

Directing our attention, then, to the anterior tent and the use made of it in divine service, and having said what is thus made manifest, ascribing the same to the Holy Spirit, the Apostle adds:

Ver. 9 *a*. **Which [is] a parable for the time present.**

It is the anterior tent, including also the use made of it, that is referred to by **which** ($\eta\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma$). This the Apostle says is a **parable**, and we supply "is," because the whole subject is contemplated in the light of the written word present before the Author and his readers, as explained at vers. 6, 7. For the same reason: **the time present** is to be understood of that time when the Holy Ghost teaches by the existence of the anterior tent there in the written ordinances. That tent is a parable, *i. e.*, a visible representation for ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ = "in reference to")⁴ **the time present** to which it belongs.⁵ In affirming this, the emphasis is not on: **a parable**, as if it needed to be said that teaching in this form is teaching by parable, or that the anterior tent had a parabolic meaning.

¹ von Hof.

² Comp. Angus.

³ Comp. Del., where at ver. 12 he labors with this notion. On the other hand, comp. Davidson, p. 174.

⁴ Davidson.

⁵ von Hof; against Alford.

Either of these is sufficiently expressed by ver. 8 alone, and was sufficiently known to be so without being expressly affirmed. The emphasis is on : **for the time present.** The parable applies to that time.

Reading with such an emphasis, we have evidently an uncompleted notion, unless something follows that characterizes the time referred to, and interprets the correspondence between the time and the parable. We find this complement of the notion in : ver. 9 b, 10.

Ver. 9 b. **During which both gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot, in respect to conscience, make the worshipper perfect.**

Such being the logical order of thought in our context, we are obliged to adopt the reading $\kappa\alpha\theta' \delta\nu$,¹ instead of $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$.² $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}$ = "during," has its usual temporal meaning. "The Apostle describes the time with reference to which the anterior tent serves

¹ With Recept. Ebrard, von Hof., de Wette, Lindsay.

² Against L.; T.; Tr.; W. & H., Lün., etc. "It is usual to prefer $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ as being best supported and the more difficult reading. As regards the support of authorities, the agreement of the oldest translations with almost all the cursive MSS. weighs quite as much as the testimony of the oldest uncial MSS. that so often present a text that has been amended on internal grounds. And in the present case it could seem unavoidable to write $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ instead of $\kappa\alpha\theta' \delta\nu$, if $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu \tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\eta\kappa\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha$ was taken as referring to the present time of the Author. If then $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$, too, had its difficulty, it was still the only way of avoiding the seemingly impossible. However, as to difficulty, one would hardly suppose it was felt, considering the ease with which expositors that adopt $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ get over the passage. They refer $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ either to $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$ (Bleek, Del.), or to $\tau\eta\varsigma \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\eta\varsigma \sigma\kappa\eta\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$. (Lün.) In the latter case they are content to paraphrase about thus: it comports with the anterior tent, or corresponded to it, that sacrifices are offered that are unable to perfect the conscience. In the former case; the parable, which the anterior tent is said to be, and such sacrifices correspond in this, that they answer to the sanctuary that bears on its front the evidence of an imperfection that points away from itself. But $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ expresses more than such a correspondence, and the Apostle would say, the anterior tent, or the parable that it is, brings such sacrificing with it and has it as a consequence; and how this is meant would be hard to say. A plainer sense appears in the, would be, exposition of $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$ referred to $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$: that such offering is in accordance with the character of the present time that is visibly represented by the anterior tent. But in that case it is the time itself, and not the typical representation of it, that brings such offering with it; and not $\kappa\alpha\theta' \eta\nu$, but $\kappa\alpha\theta' \delta\nu$ yields this thought." von Hof.

as a parable. It is a time for offering **both gifts and sacrifices** without the offering being able to make perfect 'those that performed such divine service.' The juxtaposition here of **gifts and sacrifices** to the mention of the high priest's service on the great day of Atonement (ver. 7), compared with the similar and more ample representation of v. 1-3, constrains us to understand the reference to be the same as there. "The worth of this service, that goes along with the sanctuary so prepared, may be estimated by the character of the time of which this sanctuary is the significant emblem, a sanctuary that presents no way to God."¹

So judged, the Apostle defines the worth of the "gifts and sacrifices," first negatively, **they cannot perfect the worshipper as to his conscience** (9 *b*), which is essential where one may really draw near to God; second affirmatively (ver. 10), stating what their worth amounts to:

Ver. 10. [Being] **only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) ordinances of the flesh imposed until a time of reformation.**

Only connects with **ordinances**, and **ordinances** is in apposition with "gifts and sacrifices." *Επι*= **with** has the meaning of "in conjunction with,"² and joins **meats, drinks and washings** to "gifts and sacrifices," as comprised in the same category.

This, then, is the value of the gifts and sacrifices offered during the time the anterior tent exists. They are **only ordinances of the flesh**, which points the antithesis of the foregoing negative, viz., that they do not perfect the conscience. To make plainer the exact value of the gifts and sacrifices, they are put in the same plane with **meats, drinks and washings**. By these latter must be understood things commanded to be eaten,³ etc., as the gifts and sacrifices were commanded (*δικαιώματα*); and not things forbidden as well as commanded.⁴ There were no washings that were forbidden, under Levitical law; only such as were commanded.⁵ The prescribed meats and drinks referred to here are the Paschal and sacrificial meals. By the present statement, then, the Apostle reduces the solemn and impressive services of

¹ von Hof.

² Phil. i. 3.

³ De Wette, von Hof.

⁴ Against Lün., Del., Alford.

⁵ *c. g.*, Lev. xi. 25, 28, 32, 40; xiv. 9; xv. 6, 11, etc.

the high priest on the great day of Atonement, to the same level as the ordinary services discharged in the anterior tent. As such they had a value. They represented a relationship to God. The chosen people had the outward relation of being God's people. The observance of these outward ordinances made the worshipper conscious that he was a part of that people. It is said further that these ordinances were **imposed until a time of reformation**. This expression: **imposed** reflects the sentiment of Acts xv. 10, 20, that the things in question are a burden,¹ and the following context shows that this forms an important part of the present thought. But the emphatic thought is, that, not only are they for a time that must end, as the whole context implies, but that this time is followed by another that brings in a **reformation** "a straightening up;" (*διορθώσεως*); and this is said with obvious reference to what has just been quoted from Jeremiah in viii. 8 sqq. There seems to be an intended antithesis of metaphor in *διορθώσ.* and *ἐπιτετεμ.* of *incumbentia*, steady pressing down (Bengel), and "straightening up." As such it emphasizes the contrast of the former time and the time of reformation. By this emphasis of antithesis, the reader is prepared for what follows ver. 12, where the expression: "everlasting redemption" occurs, and sees at once what is particularly in the Author's mind, and how to answer the question: *redemption from what?* The foregoing passage (vers. 6-10) represents wherein the worldly sanctuary with its appointed services is defective (as it relates to consciences that need perfecting), however perfect and glorious it may be for the worldly relation for which it was instituted. The mention of **a time of reformation** intimates that what is wanting, expressly what relates to perfecting consciences, will be supplied. "The picture is now completely drawn, and we are fully prepared for the contrast which is to be presented in the following verses."²

Ver. 11. **But Christ having appeared, a high priest of the good things to come, by the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, 12. and not by blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered once for all into the Holies obtaining an eternal redemption.**

¹ Comp. Lün., Del., Alford, Angus.

² Del.

The Apostle named the Redeemer, "Jesus," in his last previous mention of Him by name (vi. 22). He now uses the name **Christ**, and with evident propriety. The foregoing expression, prompts its use, viz., "a time of reformation" (ver. 10), which would be understood to mean the time of the Messiah, or Christ. The expression : **Christ having appeared** says in other words, the time of reformation having come. "**Having appeared** is the usual expression for *appearing*, or *coming forward* as a historical person ; appearing on the stage of the world."¹ This obvious connection of thought settles the question as to the future intended by all that is represented in our verses, including the expression : **good things to come**. They fall in the present that is represented by what Christ is, having appeared ; especially and expressly the present time wherein Christ is the High Priest He is as already represented.² The future is such relatively to the ordained services of the worldly sanctuary whose defect has just been shown.³ Such being the relation of the substance of our verses, we see that the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ = **But**, is the antithesis of the $\mu\epsilon\nu$ ver. 1. We have seen that the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ of ver. 6 introduced an antithesis of subsidiary and auxiliary import, that prepared for the full contrast that is now presented.⁴ It is not Christ's appearing in general, but that, **having appeared**, he is a **high priest**, that is of importance to the Apostle's argument ; and he gives still further precision to the notion by calling Him **high priest of the good things to come**. The expressions $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\hat{\omega}\nu$ = **good things**, does not simply mean "goods," or "possessions."⁵ It describes the quality of the things to come referred to, and is even emphatic. Comparison is intended ; **to come**, as expressing future time, being "the time of reformation," and being in antithesis to the time of imperfect ordinances, when "the way of the Holies was *not yet* made manifest," and **the good things** being in antithesis to

¹ Alford.

² Instead of $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu$, W. and H. read $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ = "that are come." Whether we adopt it or not, it is important support to the interpretation we give $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu$. Comp. Lindsay, Davidson, comp. x. 1.

³ Against Alford, von Hof.

⁴ Ebrard, von Hof.

⁵ Against Ebrard, in a present sense, etc., von Hof., Del., etc., in a future sense.

the "worldly sanctuary and ordained services," and their quality of not-goodness that has just been shown up. It is the same comparison and antithesis that underlies the whole discourse of viii.—x. 18. The particulars of **the good things to come**, as far as they are the antithetical complement of the matters mentioned vers. 1–10, are mentioned in the following clauses, which oppose the heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers, and the use made of it, to the worldly sanctuary and the use made of it. When factors, *and sufficient ones*, for defining the expressions used are so near at hand, we are not justified in looking further for them. The latter is what they¹ do who would have **good things to come** refer to what is still future for believers, viz., the heavenly inheritance.

The following clauses that define **the good things to come** express them positively and negatively. The chief point is the affirmation, that Christ **obtained an everlasting redemption**; what is said beside represents the means by which he was qualified to obtain this, the *ὁα* being *in all three instances* instrumental.² Thus in what he secured and in the means of his securing it we see **the good things** that mark the (for us) superior high-priesthood of Christ. The thing secured comes in as a climax. The means are represented first. **The greater and more perfect tent** is the same as "the true tent" viii. 2; and: **not made by hand, that is, not of this creation**, defines it, as at viii. 2, the same is defined to be that "which God pitched and not man." But here the definition points the antithesis to the "worldly sanctuary," ver. 1, and to "the time being," for which it was a parable. This tent is made by God, and is remote from the present visible creation. It is **by means of this greater and better tent** that Christ is the High Priest that He is. "For as the sanctuary so is the priest."³ The Tabernacle of which Aaron was the high priest made him the high priest he was. This is not meant in the sense that Christ was no High Priest till He entered heaven, any more than it could be inferred that Aaron was no high priest till he entered the Tabernacle. The latter was high priest by virtue of his anointing to be such. And Christ, as the Anointed,

¹ Alford, Del., von Hof., etc.² So von Hof.³ von Hof.

described Isa. lxi. 1, 6, 10 ; Ps. cx. 4, was High Priest in virtue of His being Christ. Yet, neither could be high priest without the place of high-priestly ministry ; as the present condition of the Jews, without a temple, shows, with regard to Levitical high priests. As the place, *i. e.*, the Tabernacle, characterized the time when it had valid existence, so the place of Christ's ministry, that is, the Holies, or heaven, characterizes the "time of reformation," and makes Him High Priest of good things. It is a time when the way of the Holies is made manifest,¹ and, as ver. 12 says, he entered there.

The next particular is expressed negatively and positively : **And not by means of blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood.** The reference is to the sacrifices of the great day of atonement,² with special reference to the mention of the same ver. 9, and which are now specified. The sacrificial service of a priest makes him the priest he is, as much as the sanctuary.³ Therefore the subject matter here justifies us in taking *δα* again as instrumental, as it does in the foregoing case ; nor do we see how the *οὐδὲ* forbids its having the same reference to *ἀρχιερ. τ. μ. ἀγαθῶν*.⁴ The sacrifice of the high priest on the day of atonement gave the chief significance to his office. What such sacrifices amount to, the Apostle has just said (vers. 9, 10). Christ is not the high priest that such sacrifices make one. **But by his own blood**, this is the positive representation. It reiterates the sentiment of viii. 27. By means of that he is a High Priest of good things, thus, as the antitheses to the foregoing negative shows, *of better things*⁵ than what the Apostle has called "ordinances of flesh" (ver. 10).

The particulars just mentioned point out how Christ is the High Priest he is ; the next represents him acting as so qualified. He **entered the Holies once for all**. The construction of our verses is as follows : **Christ** is subject, with **having appeared** in agreement as participial predicate ; **a high priest of good things to come** is in apposition with the subject, with : **by means of . . . his own**

¹ Comp. ver. 8.² Lev. xvi. 14, 15.³ Comp. viii. 3.⁴ Against von Hof. ; comp. Winer, p. 487, note 2 ; Kühner Gramm. II. p. 832, 833 ; and Del. in von Hof., *in loc.*⁵ Comp. ver. 13, 14.

blood, adjoined as explaining the means ; and **entered . . . once for all** is predicate. **The Holies** that Christ entered is heaven ;¹ nor is it to be thought to mean something different from **the more perfect tent**. Here, as at viii. 2, "the Holies" and "the tent" mean the same. As has been learned above (ver. 1-10), the Apostle does not transfer to heaven the distinction of Holies and Holy of holies. That which he has called **tent** he now calls **Holies** with reference to the corresponding act when the Levitical high priest entered the Holies of holies.

Once for all is meant as at vii. 27 ; he entered to continue there a high priest forever. To this predicate is added another, principally, expressed in the aorist (εὑράμενος), which signifies that what is so predicated "is contemporary with the aorist itself, εἰσῆλθεν."² The redemption was obtained *when he entered*, and *by his entering*. This may be best rendered in English : **he entered . . . and obtained an everlasting redemption**. Before considering what is meant by the **redemption**, we may note, that its being **everlasting** is to be ascribed to his having entered the Holies once for all to continue there a high priest forever, in the same sense and with the same effect as the Apostle has represented vii. 27, 28. While he is there and ministering the redemption lasts.

Regarding λύτρωσις = **redemption**, close attention to our context reveals that it is commonly taken³ in a much larger sense than the Apostle means here, and larger than the word can be made to bear of itself. Its New Testament use⁴ gives no evidence of its having acquired a distinctively evangelical sense, such as some capital words and terms have acquired, and such as "redemption" itself has since acquired. And, it may be observed, there is no ground for such a remark as that : "λύτρωσις is used by St. Luke only ; ἀπολύτρωσις is St. Paul's word, occurring also in Luke xxi. 28, and in our ver. 15, and xi. 35,"⁵ as if this

¹ viii. 1, 2.

² Alford ; comp. Ebrard, Del., von Hof., Davidson ; against Lindsay.

³ e. g., Lindsay.

⁴ Luke i. 68 ; ii. 38 ; Acts vii. 35, the only instances ; comp. LXX. Ps. cxi. 9 ; cxxx. 7.

⁵ Alford ; comp. Del.

furnished some evidence as to the authorship of our epistle. As we find the word used, "it must literally denote, not redemption or ransom, but *the act of freeing or releasing, i. e., deliverance*; not with reference to the person delivering, but to the person delivered, and therefore in the passive sense, like most substantives in—*σῖς*, Latin—*io*." ¹ The solvent of its meaning is the question: *what redemption?* To which the answer is: *your* (the reader's) *redemption, i. e., release*. On this follows the question: *release, or deliverance from what?* which can only be answered from the context. In Ps. cxi. 9, it is deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. In Ps. cxxx. 7, 8, it is deliverance out of calamities that are recognized as the chastisement of sins. In the other New Testament passages, it is deliverance by the Messiah from Roman and every other dependence.² In our verses it must be what the context shows, and not something involved in the word itself and self-evident. That meaning is not determined by the expression: "by his own blood;" for we have found *that* to relate to "high priest," as showing by what means Christ is the High Priest that he is. And whether we take "by his own blood," as showing, directly or indirectly, the meaning of the *λύτρωσις*, it does not answer the question: *redeemed from what?* but only: *what is the ransom?* Comparing the use of *λύτρον*, we observe that there is no answer, Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45, to the question: *ransom from what?* but only to the question: *what is the ransom?* Again comparing the use of the verb *λυτρόω* in the three instances of its New Testament use, we find that the answer to the question: *ransom from what?* is in Luke xxiv. 21, one thing, in Tit. ii. 14 another, in 1 Peter i. 18, still another. And in all these instances the ransom is the same, viz., the life, or blood of Christ, or, himself. We reiterate, therefore, the answer here to the question: *ransom from what?* must be what the context makes it, and that may be different from what it is in any of the foregoing instances. Such is actually the case.

The **redemption** is "deliverance" or "release" for the readers and all like them, and that in respect to what the context represents as a condition that needs release or deliverance. This rep-

¹ Cremer, *Lex. sub voc.*

² Comp. Meyer on Luke i. 68.

resentation we have had in the expression *δικαιώματα σαρκὸς*—*ἐπιτείμενα* = “ordinances of the flesh imposed”¹ (ver. 10). In ver. 14, the Apostle expressly shows that he has these in mind in the present expression **obtained redemption**. The very point of the triumphant inference of vers. 13, 14, is, that the blood-ransom of Christ delivers from the incumbent load of these ordinances of flesh, or, as he there expresses it, “cleanses the conscience from dead works.” Minds familiar with the large and comprehensive meaning commonly ascribed to our word redemption, will revolt at the simple and limited meaning now ascertained for it. To such it will seem little and pitiful. But this is only a kind of prejudice with which we are continually confronted in the study of this epistle.² Yet it will serve to reassure those who feel thus, to read 1 Peter i. 18, 19. There the Apostle Peter, while he impressively enhances the worth of the ransom, calling it: “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb blameless and spotless,” says, that it ransoms his readers “from their vain conversation delivered unto them by their heathen fathers.” If that is a worthy representation, so is this that we find in our text. Our’s is even superior. A release from burdensome ordinances which God himself imposed is more glorious, as it is more wonderful, than release from traditions imposed by heathen ancestry. It is the special aim of this Epistle to expound God’s will in this matter as revealed by the Son that speaks for God in these last days of revelation.³

This **redemption**, or release from the burden of ordinances of the flesh, is called an **everlasting** redemption by which is meant that it is release forever from them. In stating that Christ **procured** this redemption, the Apostle represents that it was done simultaneously with Christ’s entering the Holies. The point of the statement of our verse is, not to show *how* the redemption was procured, but that it *was* procured, and that it was procured when Christ entered the Holies. As Christ entered there a qualified High Priest **once for all**, *i. e.*, to continue there a High

¹ Comp. on ver. 10.

² i. 1 sqq.

³ Comp. above under vii. 25.

Priest forever, therefore the redemption, or release from the burden of ordinances of flesh is an **everlasting redemption**.¹

The Apostle adds a comment to the statement just made, that is meant to enforce the affirmation that Christ "obtained an everlasting redemption. With this the **For** connects, introducing a reason.

Ver. 13. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh; 14. how much more will the blood of Christ, who by an eternal spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The things compared here are on the one hand the sacrifices

¹ Any extended commentary on our verses will show how much that is usually discussed as if belonging to them is untouched in the above exposition. Take, for example, Delitzsch's extended comment so respectfully referred to by Alford. According to that, we must determine: what future good things=possessions, are meant by "good things to come," with nothing but the expression itself to help us. Understanding them to be the future inheritance of believers, we are to say: what may be meant by them. Again we must consider the problems suggested by the interpretation that understands the Apostle to represent that Christ entered the Holies 'through the tent not made with hands,' and "through His own blood." They are such as these: Does this more perfect tabernacle denote the sinless humanity of Christ? If so, is that "the humanity of Christ simply as such," which is an ancient view, or "the Lord's glorified humanity as the true tabernacle or habitation of God, in which the fulness of the divine nature dwells bodily" (Col. ii. 9), which is von Hofmann's view. Then, again: What different notions are expressed by "greater tabernacle and the Holies?" Assuming them to mean different things corresponding to the anterior and posterior tents, how can Christ be said to enter the Holies=Holiest of all, through His own body=the more perfect tabernacle? Or, if there is no such tautology, and we accept the meaning to be: *per carnos in eorum ingressus est*, without involving any absurdity (Del.), then which are "the heavens," and which is "the heaven" intended? Again, how shall we understand that Christ entered heaven "by His own blood?" Does He take the blood with Him? or must we think only of the effusion of His blood before entering? Is Christ's glorified body bloodless (von Hof.)? Did He enter heaven with a bloodless body, yet with His blood, "carrying His own blood for us in separation from His body into heaven" (Bengel in Del.)? How does this view, or any view comport with the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ? Again, taking *λύτρωσις* in the comprehensive sense of ransom from sin, are we to understand that the ransom was paid to God, or was it paid to Satan? The view that leads to such inquiries, unconsciously perhaps,

used on the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), and the ashes of the heifer according to Num. xix., and their efficacy, and on the other hand, Christ's blood and its efficacy as seen in his offering himself by it to God. A particular effect of the former is contrasted with a particular and similar effect of the latter, and therefrom the Apostle presses an inference, with an argument *a minori ad majus*. The former, which is conceded to be true, is that the Levitical ordinances mentioned **sanctify to the cleanness of the flesh**. This was an outward purity that constituted one right in his relations toward God so far as being right in his relations to the people of God, *i. e.*, rightly one of that people, expressed that. This effect the ordinances in ques-

yet really regards the expression "obtained an everlasting redemption" as if the chief notion it presents is that Christ does to achieve redemption, whereas we have seen that it presents the notion of what is achieved, viz., release or deliverance of those concerned. Influenced by the erroneous view just mentioned, expositors suppose the Author aims to point the antitypical parallel between Christ and His high-priesthood, with the true tabernacle and His own blood, on the one hand, and the Levitical or typical high priests and the worldly sanctuary and its ordained sacrifices, detailed ver. 1-10 on the other; and that the aim is limited to that. Delitzsch, with Alford concurring, even makes our ver. 12 the end of a section on the priesthood of Christ; the section being the second (vii. 26—ix. 12), which "compares Christ as High Priest with the high priests of the Old Testament." How this does violence to the logical connection of vers. 13, 14, has already appeared, and will appear further, when we consider those verses.

The understanding we have ascertained of our verses shows that the above problems have nothing to do with the thoughts the verses present to us. Some of the problems suggested, seeing they have no other suggestion than the erroneous understanding of our verses, are unscriptural notions altogether. Such is the notion of Christ's entering heaven where He is and where believers are to enter and be with Him, through *some* heaven that is not *that* heaven, which is yet represented by the anterior tent as the way of the Holies; or that, (so Del.), through the heaven, where believers and Christ, with angels, live in God's manifested presence and enjoy the beautiful vision, Christ passed into the Holiest (*τὰ ἅγια*), viz., "the illocal place of the infinite, self-contained, self-centred Godhead," or in other words, into "that eternal heaven of God Himself which is His own manifested eternal glory, and existed before all worlds." Other problems, that may be scriptural, are only remotely, or not at all connected with the scripture before us. To notice them in order to show this can only distract our attention. We may ignore them as matters not suggested by what we are studying.

tion had, by virtue of their being ordained for that purpose. The Apostle says **if they sanctify**, using the present tense. This he does with reference to the convictions and practice of those with whom he is reasoning. The direct address to his readers expressed by the following ὁμῶν begins with the present words. They used these rites or at least looked upon them as having the effect mentioned and conceded. In contrast with this he says: How much more **will the blood of Christ cleanse**, using the future tense. The motive for the future, compared with the foregoing present, is that the effect described in the future is *not* a matter of conviction and experience to those addressed as the other is. Nor can it be while they use the other. It will be, if they see that power of the blood of Christ as it is now represented. The Apostle says **you** and not "us," as he uses the first person plural x. 10, 19, 22, because he does not share the convictions that need correction. Thus the progress of thought in our passage confirms the reading ὁμῶν, instead of ἡμῶν ¹ ver. 14, which is, however, sufficiently established on other grounds. The last preceding direct address to the readers was at vi. 2.

The Apostle cannot mean to represent here that the blood of Christ will cleanse consciences so as to effect a perfect inward spiritual relation toward God, and do it much more than the Levitical ordinances referred to will do what is ascribed to them. It is, indeed, the truth, that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and in due season the Apostle expresses it.² But not here. Whether we take: **Much more** to mean *much more easily*, or *much more perfectly*, it is impossible to impute such reasoning to such an Author, and to an Apostle. One cannot reason *a minori ad majus* by using terms that have nothing in common. Such, however, would be the procedure, did one say: The blood of bulls cleanses the flesh; much more, then, must the blood of Christ cleanse the conscience, *i. e.*, give inward purity.³ This might be rhetoric, but not argument; as one might say: A bath cleanses the body; much more the word of God cleanses the soul. The Apostle, however, uses argument, not rhetoric. Moreover, if a suppressed

¹ Alford.² See below in ver. 26 b.³ Comp. Davidson.

premise could be found¹ to adjust the above minor and major in the sense that the major would represent that Christ's blood more easily or more perfectly cleanses the conscience of guilt than the Levitical ordinances gave fleshly purity, then we have a representation that conflicts with what we otherwise believe on Scriptural grounds. The blood of Christ will cleanse from guilt, and will certainly and fully do so.² But scripture and, what is more to the point, our epistle,³ teaches that *all that blood*, with *all* that gives it value *was needed* to procure that benefit. Nothing justifies us in regarding it as more than enough. On the other hand, the blood of goats and bulls sufficed for the cleansing for which they were appointed. And both the latter and the former were efficient by virtue of the same thing, viz., God's having ordained them for that effect. Effects referred to a cause whose sufficiency is identical cannot properly be spoken of as if one had more facile or more perfect efficiency than the other in their respective spheres. The Author does not represent such a thing. What he represents is something that enforces the truth affirmed, ver. 12, that Christ obtained an everlasting redemption from the imposed ordinances of the flesh. Our vers. 13, 14 are an appeal to his readers, who rely on the efficacy of these ordinances, to see in **the blood of Christ** a greater efficacy *of the same kind*. By the blood of goats and bulls they were sanctified in the cleansing of the flesh, so that they might appear before God in the service on earth. But as often as they offered themselves for such service it must be by repeating the cleansing. If they saw such efficacy in these things, why did they not see a greater efficacy in the blood of Christ, viz., that it cleansed not merely the flesh, and for a year, or till the next contact with a corpse, but that it cleansed them forever and thus perfectly, so that their consciences even were cleansed from feeling any need of renewed recourse to these fleshly ordinances of cleansing? Such an argument is a pure instance of *a minori ad majus*.⁴ The Apostle both has the thought and attaches importance to it, that the blood of Christ

¹ Davidson finds it in the following clauses.

² Comp. below on ver. 26 b.

³ Comp. ii. 10, 11, 17.

⁴ Comp. the *a fortiori*, x. 28, 29; also the *a minori*, Matt. vi. 30; Rom. v. 10.

sanctifies the people of God to the cleansing of the flesh or body, as appears when he says: "having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." As he expresses the thought elsewhere, we may suppose he means it here, if it fits here, and the present expressions are adequate to represent it.¹ In presenting this argument, the Apostle assumes the efficacy of the blood of goats and bulls, in the matter of cleansing, and opposes to it the blood of Christ with the statement of an efficacy *it* has shown, which is also assumed as admitted, and from this he presses the inference, that the latter will cleanse the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The Apostle vers. 11, 12 has represented Christ as High Priest of good things to come, *i. e.*, that have come, and, pointing the correspondence to the high priest's action on the great day of atonement, has first stated, that by means of His own blood Christ entered the Holies. By this entrance He offered Himself in the presence of God.² In his present appeal to the blood of Christ as contrasted with the blood of goats and bulls, he opposes to what the latter effects, what the blood of Christ *has effected*, viz., that by it Christ **offered himself without spot to God**, meaning what Christ did when He entered the Holies. That such is the meaning, and not that the clause: **who offered himself unto God**, is epexigetical of **the blood of Christ**, meaning that He offered Himself up as a sacrifice on the cross,³ appears, not only from the logical connection just noticed, but also from the meaning of *προσφέρειν* as distinguished from *ἀναφέρειν* explained under vii. 27.⁴ Did the Apostle mean to refer here to Christ's shedding His blood on the cross, he would here, as at vii. 27, use the word *ἀναφέρειν*. But meaning to point to an effect of that blood when shed, viz., that by it Christ entered the Holies, as the high priest entered the earthly Holies, and so offered Himself to God, he uses *προσφέρειν*. In so understanding the *προσφέρειν* as relating to what Christ did when entering heaven, and not as relating to what He did on the cross, we do not lend ourselves to interest of

¹ x. 22; comp. xii. 24; xiii. 12.

² Comp. below on ver. 24.

³ As de Wette, Del., Alford, Davidson.

⁴ Comp. von Hof, *in loc.*, and on ver. 14; and above on viii. 3.

the Socinian interpretation which does the same.¹ The latter ignores the efficacy of the sacrifice on the cross. The meaning we obtain assumes it.

In describing the efficacy of Christ's blood, that by it he offered Himself without spot to God, the Apostle adds the further consideration, viz., that He so offered Himself **by an eternal spirit**. The *δαί* is instrumental,² as we found it in vers. 11, 12, and expresses by what means Christ offered Himself to God. It was by virtue of what He was, viz., **an eternal spirit**; for the expression describes Christ Himself,³ and does not mean the Holy Spirit, either directly⁴ or indirectly.⁵ The expression introduces under another form the notion already emphasized so much, that Christ is a High Priest forever, and that He forever lives to make intercession for His people. It answers to the expression vii. 15, where, in contrast with the Levitical priesthood, Christ is said to be a priest "according to the power of an indissoluble life."⁶ In fact our present expression: **who by an eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God**, resumes in brief the description of Christ, vii. 26-28. Added to the expression: **the blood of Christ**, it expands the effect of that blood, representing it as an ever-living and valid effect. From this the inference is pressed: **how much more will that blood cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God**.

Cleansing the conscience from works does not express an antithesis to: **sanctifying to the cleanness of the flesh**. It expresses the same notion raised to a higher power. We may compare for illustration Paul's argument, Rom. v. 10: "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." In this statement, "saved" is not the antithesis of "reconciled," but the same notion expressed in its perfected result. So, also, **cleanness of the flesh** effected by sprinkling of blood, and of ashes of an heifer, is effected in its highest power,

¹ See that use in Grot., Bleek; quoted in von Hof., Stuart, Alford.

² So von Hof. ³ Davidson. ⁴ Against de Wette, Bengel, Lindsay.

⁵ Against Bleek in Del.

⁶ Riehm p. 525 sqq., Davidson; against von Hof.

i. e., in perfection, when the conscience is cleansed from these works, so as no more to feel the need of them. This receives a clearer expression, when, at x. 14, we read, "by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

The Apostle calls the Levitical rites of cleansing, **dead works**; for such is his reference in using this expression.¹ By calling them dead, the Apostle pronounces the sentence of their abrogation, and introduces a topic, in the fashion we have observed before, that he will resume and elaborate.² They are dead works because they belong to a time that has expired, and have thus lost all validity; and because they, any way, could not make perfect as to conscience.³ Thus, also, they are dead as unable to impart or sustain life, and are unfit to use in serving God. The Apostle has used the expression **dead works** vi. 1. And we may note, by the way, that the present importance attached to them as a matter of instruction, confirms the view of their place in "going on to full-growth," that we presented there. At vi. 1, the Apostle speaks of "repentance from dead works;" here of "cleansing the conscience from dead works." As we find the expression: **dead works** no where else, we can infer its meaning only from the Author's usage. The notion vi. 1 and here is identical. A conscience that needs cleansing from dead works is a conscience of dead works in a sense like that in which we speak of: "conscience of an idol."⁴ And the conscience is cleansed of dead works when it repents of them, *i. e.*, forsakes them for just and sufficient reason. The reason is sufficient when one sees the efficacy of Christ's blood. By that blood Christ offered Himself to God. To gather up the full expression of this thought from some of the expressions of our epistle, let us say: by that blood Christ entered the Holies, that is, He entered into heaven itself; to appear in the presence of God for us, and by that offered Himself without spot to God, by which is meant His correspondence to a sacrifice, without blemish; and there He is the High Priest we need, holy, guileless, undefiled, removed from sinners, a

¹ So de Wette, Del., etc.

² x. 1-18.

³ vii. 19; ix. 9, 10.

⁴ Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 7; whether the correct reading or not, it is correct in thought.

high priest of good things to come, *i. e.*, that have come. Such is the comprehensive thought from which the Apostle makes the self-evidential inference: **how much more.** The special point is, that *by His blood* He offered Himself to God, with the thought understood, that it was for us. The resistless inference is, that by that blood they, the readers, may present themselves to God, and having that cleansing they need no other, and their conscience is freed from ever having recourse to the ordinances on which they have heretofore relied, which are consequently only dead works for them. They are thus and always in a relation to God that permits them to approach Him and engage in His service.¹

The Apostle says: **to serve the living God.** And here we may notice that at vi. 1, "repentance from dead works, and faith on God," is a conjunction of notions similar to: "cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." **Living God** must be more than an *elegant* antithesis to **dead works.**² "It stands in correct and logical antithesis to dead works."³ This we may assume in the interpretation of such an Author, who never wastes a word. Yet what that antithesis is exactly, is hard to detect, as the varying explanations of expositors prove.

Taken without the qualification **living; in order to serving God** has a plain meaning. It is, first of all, approaching God with boldness, assured that through our High Priest we may do so, and do it continually, as the Apostle has exhorted iv. 16, and at vii. 25 reiterated the sufficient ground. In the second place, and that is the thought expressed here, it is a service such as the second covenant demands, when, as the language of Jeremiah, quoted viii. 10, shows, the laws of God are written in the hearts of His people. The service must be such as corresponds to those laws. The first notion the Apostle reiterates again x. 19-22, in a concluding résumé, and again with amplification xii. 22-24. The second, relating to serving God, he amplifies xii. 28-xiii. 6. With this serving God, the notion **living God** must consist. As the approaching and the serving God are notions that are reiterated by the Author, we may expect to find the notion he would express by **living God** recurring in the same connection. At xii.

¹ x. 19-23.² As Calvin.³ Ebrard.

22 the approach to God is described as "coming to the city of the living God," and in the same context (vers. 28, 29) we read : "Let us have grace whereby we may offer service (λατρεύωμεν) well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe ; for our God is a consuming fire." These thoughts remind us of iii. 12 with its warning, and of iv. 12 sqq. where the Apostle has said in minatory language ; "The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword," *etc.* And with a similar sentiment, he says, x. 31 : "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Moreover, the last quoted expression is joined, as we shall see, to a warning against such a return to legal observances for sanctification as is tantamount to rejecting the Son of God and despising the blood of the covenant wherewith one was sealed. We are thus constrained to think that the expression **living God** in our verse, is meant to intimate the same thing that is more fully expressed x. 31. Conjoined with **dead works** it is a preliminary note of the alarm that is fully sounded at x. 26-31. While the present argument shows that the blood of Christ sanctifies so as finally and perfectly to fit one to serve God, the word : **living** warns the reader to beware of serving God with works that are ordinances of the flesh, and belong to a broken covenant that is replaced by a new covenant ; that are dead works because God has abrogated them, and must be deadly works to him who brings them to the living God. It is because of this background of his thoughts, which he will soon bring into the foreground, that the Apostle does not say simply, that the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from works of the flesh to serve God ; but he says from *dead* works, to serve the *living* God.

The Apostle has pointed to the blood of Christ and His offering of Himself by it to God, and how, by virtue of His being an eternal spirit, what He did has everlasting efficacy, so that His blood cleanses so completely from transgressions that the conscience feels no more need of the Levitical cleansings. In this, while still pressing the force of the truth thus far made so prominent in this epistle, viz., that Christ lives, he has given special prominence to His death, and the effect of that. This

introduces a transition in his discourse, which, to x. 18, presses the importance and significance of Christ's having died. In vers. 13, 14 he has interrupted the course of his argument by one of those direct appeals, so characteristic of the first six chapters; but a shorter one. It is as if he paused after a convincing presentation of his subject, to give it instant effect, and claim the legitimate fruit of it on the spot. This trait of the context, and the characteristic of the subsequent discourse just noted, and especially the totally new phase of thought presented in the use of διαθήκη in the changed sense of **testament**, require us to recognize that the discourse takes a fresh start.¹ This understanding requires us to take τοῦτο as referring forward to what follows.² The reference to what precedes is admissible only so far as vers. 13, 14, represent a need for cleansing from transgressions that is supplied by Christ's death.³ But as that notion is resumed in the following εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν . . . παραβάσεων, the reference backward is gratuitous.

Ver. 15. And for this cause he is mediator of a new covenant, that death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Though the discourse takes a fresh start, it has a close connection with what immediately precedes. The Apostle is dealing with readers that have a conscience of sins, viz., transgressions as determined by the Mosaic ordinance, and think they can be cleansed from them only by the prescribed Levitical rites. He has just concluded a representation that shows that the blood of Christ gives that cleansing in a perfect way, viz., once for all. He now assumes this as proved, and does so expressly in the clause: **for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant**, and proceeds to represent the effect. By: **transgressions under the first covenant**, is not meant those of all mankind;⁴ nor does it *directly* mean the transgressions of the covenant peo-

¹ Comp. Davidson.

² With Ebrard and many; see in Lün.; against Lün., Del., Alford, von Hof, Davidson, etc.

³ Comp. Davidson.

⁴ Against Alford.

ple in all the past since God gave the first covenant, as if the Apostle *expressed* that Christ's death had retrospective, or *ex post facto* efficacy.¹ The Apostle has the covenant people of the present time in mind, particularly his readers, and *their* transgressions, or conscience of transgressions under the first covenant. He has already represented the concrete case (vers. 13, 14) as it concerns his readers. He now, for his further argument presents the truth in the abstract. By compelling inference, however, this retrospective effect of Christ's death must be believed, since all must be saved by Him, and in the same way. And this inference is corroborated by the statement of xi. 40. As at ver. 12 the Apostle calls the effect of Christ's sacrifice λύτρωσιν, so he here calls it ἀπολύτρωσιν. The former applies to the persons delivered; the latter to the transgressions *from* whose consequences they are delivered.² We can only render both words in English by **redemption**, meaning **deliverance**.³ This return to substantially the same expression as in ver. 12, shows that the alternate or synonymous expression "cleanse the conscience" ver. 14 means, as we have represented, a cleansing so complete that one is delivered forever from all concern about Levitical means of cleansing. The very transgressions themselves have been redeemed. Thus assuming the truth of the foregoing representation, and expressly resuming it, the Apostle says, referring to the expression of it by τοῦτο : **For this cause he is mediator of a new covenant that death having taken place—those called, may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** In this statement the emphatic notion is presented in : **death having taken place.** It is by means of this that those called **receive the promise** which is the chief effect, the deliverance from transgressions being the preliminary condition.⁴ This reference to transgressions under the first covenant, and the term **those called** (comp. iii. 1), and the mention of the promise of the everlasting inheritance, continue to show that the Apostle has particularly in mind here, as in all that has preceded, purely his Jewish readers, and that his aim is to show how Christ is mediator of a new covenant for them. That He is such a Media-

¹ Against von Hof., Del., Lindsay, Davidson.

² Comp. xi. 35.

³ See on ver. 12.

⁴ Comp. viii. 12.

tor has been already represented viii. 6-13. And following that, the betterness of that covenant and the superiority of Him that mediates it have been represented by displaying the nature of that covenant itself, and as compared with institutions belonging to the first covenant, and by showing what Christ accomplishes, Christ that lives forever a High Priest at God's right hand. Now it is to be shown what a mediator he is *by virtue of His dying*. Not that this aspect of Christ's mediatorial work has been without mention in the previous discourse. From i. 3 ("having made purification of sins") to the present, it has received frequent mention, which has grown in distinctness, all which has served to bring it more and more into prominence. To the present, however, the dying of Christ and the efficacy of His blood has kept that relative place in the discourse expressed at i. 3, where the notion is introduced participially as related to the chief theme, viz., Christ the high priest at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now it is presented for particular consideration. Christ that has been represented as the mediator of a new covenant in other respects, is here said to be such **on this account, viz., so that** (*ὅπως*, expressing the aim, and *θανάτου γενομένου*, with the consequences ascribed to it being the thing in view, or the final cause), **death having taken place, the called may receive the promises.** On **receive the promises**, comp. vi. 15. Evidently *θανάτου γενομ.* is, as has been said, the emphatic notion. In view of the foregoing discourse, nothing else in the verse that is affirmed of the mediatorship is singular enough to receive emphasis.¹ But the sufficient reason for understanding the emphasis to be there is, that the dying of Christ is immediately discoursed upon with a view to showing the need of it and the efficacy of it.

Our ver. 15 presents the theme of discourse till x. 18. The clause : **death having taken place . . . the promise** presents a topic that is amplified in vers. 16-28, in which vers. 16-26 deal with the emphatic thought, that Christ's dying was *necessary* to His being Mediator of the new covenant, while the (at present) emphatic thought of what is the final effect of that death, viz.,

¹ Against Del., who emphasizes *καινής*; and Lun., who emphasizes *διαθήκης*.

receiving the promise by those that are called, reappears vers. 27, 28, in : shall appear . . to them that wait for him, unto salvation. In vers. 16-26 the Apostle shows the *necessity* for Christ's death by an accumulation of appeals fitted to meet the objections of Jewish minds that found in the cross of Christ a stumbling block. The first appeal vers. 16, 17 (which according to what we observe to be a part of the Author's style, starts from the latest expression used, viz., **the everlasting inheritance**), cites the case of testaments and common usage regarding them. This is followed (vers. 18-22) by appeal to what was true of the first covenant, citing *four* (4) *particulars*, viz., (1.) that it was dedicated with sprinkling blood (ver. 18-20); (2.) **and** (*καὶ—ὁ*) that the tabernacle and its appurtenances were likewise sprinkled (ver. 21); (3.) **and** (*καὶ*) that almost all things are cleansed with blood (ver. 22 *a*); (4.) **and** (*καὶ*) the acknowledged truth, that apart from shedding of blood there is no remission (ver. 22 *b*). Following these appeals the Apostle represents positively the operation of Christ's death as it corresponds, in respect to shedding blood, to those necessary uses of blood in connection with the Old Covenant that he mentions in his appeals.

In illustration of the need of Christ's dying in order to His being mediator of a new covenant, the first appeal is to common usage in respect to testaments.

Ver. 16. For where a testament [is] there must of necessity be death of the testator.

Regarding the precise meaning of *φέρεσθαι*, which we leave as good as not translated at all,¹ we may be sure that the literal or primary meaning: "be brought"² gives no sense. Any one of several of the secondary senses of this much-used and well-worn word, *e. g.*, "alleged, implied,"³ answers very well. It is obvious that what is meant is, that when a testament is mentioned as something in force, it is understood of course that the testator has died. We may even suppose that the Author mentally supplies the same verb (*φέρεται*) in the first clause of our sentence that he uses in the second, instead of the *ἐστίν* of our translation. The

¹ With versions of 1611, 1881.

² *ibid*, margin.

³ So Alford.

rendering would then be: "where a testament is mentioned¹ or adduced, there must necessarily be mentioned the death of the testator." As for the meaning of διαθήκη, it is useless to try² to give it here any other sense than **testament**, or last will.³ We must, as well as we can, account for the sudden use of the word in this sense, introduced without preface, and that in a context (vers. 15, 19, 20), that uses it chiefly in the sense of covenant.

"The charge brought against the writer on account of his transition of meaning in διαθήκη is without ground. He is thinking in Greek [and writing to those that do the same.] In Greek διαθήκη has these two meanings; not divided off from one another by any such line of demarcation as when expressed by two separate words, but both lying under one and the same word. What more common, or more ordinarily accepted, than to educe out of some one word its various shades of meaning, and argue on each separately as regards the matter in hand? Take the very word 'Testament' as an example. In our common parlance it now means a 'book;' the 'Old Testament,' the book of the former covenant, the 'New Testament,' the book of the latter. But we do not therefore sink the other and deeper meaning; nay, we rather insist on it, that it may not become lost in that other and more familiar one. I cannot see how the Writer's method of procedure here differs essentially from this."⁴

Beside this justification in the word itself, a natural suggestion for the present appeal (to what is true in regard to a testament) appears, as has been said above, in the mention of "the eternal inheritance," (ver. 15). And it must be remembered, moreover, in this connection that,⁵ the word "covenant," when used as the name for that which determines the relations between God and men, has a sense that differs from its ordinary meaning. That common meaning is "an agreement between two or more persons," implying that both parties are active in giving form to what is agreed on. In God's covenants this has no place. He alone determines the relations, though two are parties to what is

¹ Compare Passow, *Lex.*, *sub. voce*, B. 2, a.

² As von Hof, Ebrard, etc.

³ Comp. Alford, Del., Davidson, etc.

⁴ Alford on ver. 20; comp. Farrar.

⁵ See on viii. 12.

determined. This makes the covenant very near the same thing as a testament.¹ When to this is added, that the chief blessings of God's covenant are future, and that they are appropriately named an inheritance,² we have, in the religious use of διαιθήκη, a word that admits of such a transition from one sense of it to another as the Apostle here makes, and that, too, as here, without other preparation or preface, than appears in the mention of "the eternal inheritance." In English it would need no more preface than: "take *e. g.*, the case of a testament."

All that is required in the present case is, that we see some obvious reason for such an appeal to what is true in regard to a testament. Chrysostom says: "It was likely that many weakly-disposed persons disbelieved in the promises of Christ, just because Christ had died. Paul, then, abundantly confutes this sentiment by instancing this example taken from common custom. For this very reason, he says, we must be assured. Because, not while testators live, but when they are dead, then testaments are steadfast and obtain force."³ Though this is reading between the lines, we are encouraged to concur in this conjecture, because we know from other sources that such was precisely the common difficulty of the Jewish mind about a dead Messiah. The two disciples going to Emmaus were representative of all, when they said: "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel." The death of an agent seemed to put an end to his purpose. And the reply of Jesus: "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory"⁴ is the text for all Apostolic replies to the apprehension.⁵ It is the text of our ix. 16-28. Paul declares of the Jews that the preaching of Christ crucified was to them a stumbling block as it was to the Greeks foolishness;⁶ which means that it was always as much the one as the other. It was, thus, something inevitably to be encountered in the presentation of such matter as this epistle offers, seeing it was written to Jews. Thus the conjecture of Chrysostom is most reasonable.

¹ Comp. Alford.

² So also von Hof.

³ Comp. Heb. i. 3; Acts iii. 17, 18, 21.

⁴ Comp. Del.

⁵ Luke xxiv. 21, 26.

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 23.

This explanation of the present language of the Apostle is further recommended when we consider what is precisely the scope of it. For this we must take the following verse which completes the thought.

Ver. 17. (For a testament is steadfast in the case of the dead), since does it ever avail when the testator lives?

In this verse the first clause is parenthetical.¹ It affirms, as something well understood, what is true of a testament in general.² Hence the plural *νεκροῖς*.³ This prepares for the affirmation that follows, which, as self-evidential, is stated interrogatively, and which connects with ver. 16. For the second clause is interrogative, and also in harmony with the Author's style.⁴ Thus the Apostle's forcible representation is: For where a testament is adduced there is adduced of necessity the death of the testator; since how does the testament ever avail when he lives? When we ask: what is proved by this appeal to the case of testaments? we detect nothing that bears any likeness or relation to the blood sprinkling on which vers. 18 sqq. proceeds to discourse. What is proved is that *death may be the very means by which the purpose of an agent is made effective*. The occasion for such proof would be the apprehension of some, that the death of an agent put an end to his purpose; and so the Apostle's readers might think concerning the death of Christ, which he has just represented as having such an important relation to his being mediator of a new covenant. We suppose, therefore, that the Apostle in our verses 16, 17 speaks "man-fashion,"⁵ meeting, as Chrysostom conjectures, an unexpressed objection that must, in such readers as his, meet him on the very threshold of his subject when he proposes to represent the relation of the dying of Christ to his being mediator of a new covenant. Before showing *positively* the import of this, he *negatively*, and in general, shows that

¹ Against Lün., where see cited writers in favor.

² von Hof.

³ Against Alford.

⁴ So Bengel, von Hof., etc., vers. 1881; comp. chap. i. 5, 13, 14; ii. 3; iii. 16-14; ix. 14, against Winer, Gram, p. 480, who objects that it is too rhetorical for the style; comp. Davidson.

⁵ Gal. iii. 15 *κατὰ ἀνθρώπου*.

his dying does not *ipso facto* nullify his efficient agency, but *may* be the very means of giving it effect.

It may be observed to the advantage of the view just presented of vers. 16, 17, that it entirely obviates some perplexing inquiries. Such an inquiry is: How can the saving work of Christ be compared to a testament? Another is: Seeing it is God that makes the covenant (viii. 8 sqq.), in what sense may it be said, even when taking *διαθήκη* in the sense of "testament," that the testator must die to give it effect? On this follows the inference that, in this representation, Christ is regarded as making the testament,¹ *i. e.*, the covenant. But this again raises the question: How does that consist with the previous representation that God makes the covenant, and that Christ is the mediator of the covenant? Again: what likeness is there between the efficacy of Christ's death, as heretofore represented, and still more pointedly set forth ver. 18 sqq., and the effect of a death that leaves a testament in force?² The view of vers. 16, 17 presented above makes all such questions gratuitous, because entirely irrelevant, there being nothing to require their consideration, and barely enough to suggest them.

Having met an objection by the representation of vers. 16, 17, the Apostle proceeds in close connection with the chief thought of ver. 15, viz., that on account of his dying Christ is mediator of a new covenant.

Ver. 18. Whence neither has the first [covenant] been dedicated without blood.

The *ὅθεν* = whence refers back to ver. 15;³ as at ii. 17, there is a similar reference back beyond a verse (16) that introduces a collateral thought like that of our vers. 16, 17. The Apostle still appeals to the records of the Pentateuch, and to the institutions of Israel in their most original form. He is, in fact, about to give again some of "the first principles" relating to his topic as he has done twice before.⁴ And we may add, that the seeming discrepancies that call for some attention here, may be compared to those we have noticed with reference to what the Author

¹ Riehm p. 595.

³ Against Alford and the most.

² Comp. Del., Calvin.

⁴ Comp. vii. 1-3; viii. 1-3.

has represented of Melchizedek and of the high priests. In all these references to original institutions, the Author instances some obvious things not expressly included in the Mosaic documents.

In our verse the Apostle resumes the consideration of the new covenant. It is : **covenant**,¹ and not : "testament,"² that must be supplied to the word ἡ πρωτοτης = **the first**. This is obvious from the recurrence to the antitheses of "new" (ver. 15) and **the first** distinguishing the notion διαθηκης, with which viii. 7-13 has made us familiar. In the verb ἐγκαθίζω = **to dedicate**, "inaugurate," we have an additional reason for referring the εἶπεν back to ver 15. For did it relate to vers. 16, 17 as a notion preparing for the present statement, it would imply that the death that leaves the way free for a testament to have force may, in some sense, be considered as dedicating or inaugurating the testament; a notion which is meaningless. The appeal is now to another and distinct transaction. The Apostle writes : **has been dedicated**, the perfect, because here, as in similar cases,³ he does not mean the transaction in its historical connection, but as it is recorded in the Scripture that is present to his mind,⁴ or as an institution that, from the view-point of his readers is of present force.⁵

The reference in vers. 19, 20 is to the great covenant sacrifice of Exod. xiv., which followed immediately the promulgation of the Sinaitic code of laws (Exod. xix-xxiii), then first committed to writing in the "book of the covenant."⁶ In ver. 21, the reference is to other similar transactions⁷ occurring later when the Tabernacle was constructed. What is specified is only by way of example, by which examples the Apostle would call to mind a great variety of things that, according to law, were treated in that particular manner he is considering. Thus he says :

Ver. 19. **For when every commandment had been spoken according to law by Moses to all the people, taking the blood of the calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20. saying: This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded in regard to**

¹ Davidson.² Alford.³ vii. 6, 9; viii. 13.⁴ von Hof.⁵ Alford.⁶ Del.⁷ On the καὶ δέ comp. Del.

you. 21. And moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. [And he adds in a summary way :] ver. 22. And almost all things are cleansed with blood, according to the law ; and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

What is specified ver. 21 "refers probably to the same anointing of the Tabernacle and its furniture as that mentioned Lev. viii. 10 as that accompanying the consecration of Aaron and his sons. Aaron's consecration is enjoined Exod. xxix, and accomplished Lev. viii. The anointing of the sanctuary is enjoined Exod. xl., and the most suitable time for the fulfillment of such injunction would be where we think we find it at Lev. viii. 10."¹

In consulting the Mosaic records, four seeming discrepancies as to facts are observed, (1) Our Author says **goats and calves** where Exodus mentions only **calves**. (2) Our Author says : **with water and scarlet wool and hyssop**, of which there is no mention at all in Exodus. (3) Our Author says : **sprinkled the book**, of which there is no mention in Exodus. (4) Our Author speaks of **sprinkling the Tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood** ; Exod. xl. 9, speaks only of "anointing with oil." For the discussion of these discrepancies we may refer to Delitzsch *in loco*² and adopt his results as fully justified. In reference to (1) he says : "I prefer to assume that **calves and goats** is used by our Author as a general term for all bloody sacrifices." von Hofmann says the same, adding : "The expression says, as does also x. 4, nothing more than that it was blood of beasts that was so applied."

In reference to (2) and (3) he says : "These additions to the Mosaic narrative, whether derived from tradition or conjecture, were natural and obvious." In reference to (4) he urges, that, beside the probability of it from analogy "we have here, in fact, a literal agreement between Josephus and the writer of this epistle in reference to the same transactions." Delitzsch sums up : "We are justified in concluding that, when our Author goes beyond the letter of the Torah, both in describing the covenant sacrifices and the consecration of the Tabernacle and its furniture, he fol-

¹ Del.² Also von Hof.

lows a then existing tradition of which other traces are now lost. The main point with him is evidently this: that in both cases (the earthly copies and the heavenly realities) the dedication did not take place without the employment of sacrificial blood."

We may, then, assume the correctness of the Apostle's statements and disregard the disposition of some to make difficulties. He has stated enough for his present purpose, and it is with his aim in making this representation that we have to do. The essential thing is, that the people that were joined to God by covenant to serve Him (compare: "serve the living God," ver. 14, and "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do," Exod. xxiv. 3), and the written instrument that embodied that covenant, and the Tabernacle with all its furniture that was the central and only place of worship and service, and the only spot where one could approach and enjoy communion with God, all were consecrated by blood to be what was required for the relations instituted by the first covenant. In the comprehensive representations of ver. 22, let it be noted, that the first clause is qualified (by *σχεδόν*, whose force extends only so far),¹ while the second is universal. The statements are, (*a*) that almost everything was purified by blood **and** (*καί*), (*b*) wherever there is remission it *must* be by blood shedding. This last (*b*) expresses the fundamental notion that the Apostle would illustrate by the appeal to what was true of the first covenant. As he thus concentrates attention on that, it must only diffuse and weaken our apprehension of his subject to attempt to gather up the typical import of the details that came in for notice.² The same may be said of the observation that, when the Apostle instead of: "behold the blood" as in the Hebrew and the LXX., writes: **this is the blood of the covenant** (ver. 20), "it is with conscious or unconscious reference to the sacramental words of the holy Eucharist" (Matt. xxvi. 28).³ Whether this observation be true or not, we can detect no influence that the supposed fact may have in the present discourse.

The representation of vers. 18-22 is in order to show the

¹ With Del., against von Hof., Lün., Alford.

² As, e. g., Del.

³ Del.

importance of "death taking place" for the efficiency of that new covenant that Christ mediates. The appeals vers. 18-22 have force as transactions done **according to law**. But, in addition, the matter adduced *is proof because it was typical*. The *things* that are mentioned as sprinkled with blood were copies of things in heaven, and *what was done* to them *according to law* was a copy of what was done in reality to the heavenly things. This is assumed, without precise and direct expression, in the inferences which are presented in the following vers. (23-26). And these inferences *represent directly and positively* the necessity for Christ's dying in order to His being mediator of the new covenant. That is, *some* of the positive grounds, viz., such as correspond to matters referred to in the foregoing appeals.

It is an advantage in the foregoing explanation of vers. 18-22, that no perplexity is suggested by the Author's use of the terms: **dedicate, sprinkle, cleanse, shedding blood**. We need not explain any synonymous signification or relation that they may have, or relation of the various statements to one another. The notion common to *all four references* is the use of blood according to law. The references are to distinct things, and their force is cumulative, and therefore is apprehended by our regarding them separately, as so many items.

Ver. 23. It [was] necessary, then, for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

It does not matter whether we supply "was" or "is" to **necessary**. The two clauses dependent on ἀνάγκη, and made antithetical by μέν and δέ, have **necessity** predicated of them in the same way. Time past or present is unimportant to the notion expressed. But English idiom requires the use of a copula, where the Greek does not. What is affirmed as necessary is not that either the heavenly things or their copies must be cleansed. It has been affirmed viii. 3 that Christ must have something to offer. It is assumed, as something understood, that such cleansing takes place. But that being so, it is affirmed that in the case of the copies it must be **with these**, while in the case of the heavenly things themselves it must be **with better sacrifices**

than these. The point of the contrast presented lies especially in the fact that the latter must be better. Sacrifice is the means of cleansing in either case; but in the latter it is necessary that the means should be better.

It is not obvious at a glance (*a*) to what the Apostle refers by *τούτοις* = **these**; (*b*) nor why he should speak of **better sacrifices** (plural) when Christ's was *one sacrifice*; (*c*) nor why he should speak at all of **cleansing the heavenly things themselves**. With regard to (*a*) we are required, on the one hand, by the antithesis of the two clauses to understand that sacrifices are meant in both instances, with regard to (*b*), **better sacrifices** implies sacrifices not so good. Agreeably to this, we must find a reference of *τούτοις* to a plural notion in the foregoing context, that may be comprehended in the word **sacrifices**. But this does not require us to confine its reference to ver. 22, nor to the previous mention of "the blood of calves and goats" (ver. 19). In xiii. 16, the Apostle uses "sacrifice" for religious actions that involve no shedding of blood.¹ He may, then, use the word sacrifices here as comprehending both the shedding of blood and especially the subsequent actions attending its use, as described vers. 19-22. This comprehensive reference explains the *τούτοις*, in the neuter plural and also (*b*) the mention of **sacrifices** in the plural. This construction does not involve as a consequence that we must understand the Apostle to imply the notion, that (*c*) what Christ does in cleansing the heavenly things themselves is a continuous and repeated action, as "minister of the true tabernacle" (viii. 2).² The inauguration of the first covenant, by shedding blood and sprinkling the book and the people, and the later sprinkling of the tabernacle and its utensils, were successive acts only by a necessity in the copies of the heavenly things; like the necessity of the copy-priests being many, by reason of death hindering their continuing (vii. 23). As Christ, one priest forever, satisfies the relation of antitype to priests that are many by reason of death; so, what Christ did in cleansing the heavenly things satisfies the relation of type and antitype, if He does all in one transaction of shedding His blood and going to God.

¹ Comp. von Hof.; and v. 7.

² Against von Hof.

The shedding of blood, and actions cleansing the various things by it according to law, constitute the plural notion expressed by **sacrifices**. The copies of the heavenly things expressly mentioned in the context are the first covenant represented by the book, the people, and the tabernacle and its utensils. We infer that **the heavenly things themselves** involved in the present mention are the new covenant, the people of God, the true tabernacle, and its belongings; (the Apostle mentions "an altar" xiii. 10). The antithesis of: τὰ ἐπουράνια = "heavenly things," is τὰ ἐπίγεια = "earthly things," i. e., things on earth:¹ And the fundamental notion of the antithesis is, that heaven where God is, is the source whence all concerning God and what God requires of man is revealed. When it is revealed it is on earth. What is not revealed is yet in heaven with God. "The city of God," is not yet revealed, hence it is called "the heavenly Jerusalem."² When it is to be revealed, it will "come down out of heaven from God."³ **The heavenly things themselves** are part of the same notion as "Mount Zion, the city of God," and are called **heavenly** in the sense just expressed. The total of them does not make heaven (the αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν of ver. 24); but that heaven is where they are. It is idle to attempt the representation of this truth in some realistic way. We have a representation in xii. 22-24 that may suffice. There we have the church of the first born, the spirits of just men made perfect; the Mediator of the new covenant, and the sprinkling, and God the Judge of all. The pertinent inquiry here is (c): *why should the Apostle speak of cleansing these heavenly things* that are with God? It does not relieve the difficulty of the Apostle's words to confine the predicate: **cleansing** to the first clause of our verse, and supply, or construe it to mean: "dedicate" in the second.⁴ For, were this grammatically possible, the "dedication" (ver. 18) is effected by cleansing (ver. 19). Let us notice that the expression: "cleansing" does not imply previous defilement. For the tabernacle, and especially the holy place within the vail,⁵ was not cleansed as a thing that had been defiled, though the people were cleansed

¹ Comp. John iii. 12.² xii. 22.³ Rev. xxi. 10.⁴ De Wette, Lün.⁵ Lev. xvi. 16.

in that sense. The place where God would meet sinners (or the priests that appeared for sinners), was cleansed by sacrificial blood, because sinners were to appear there. There God would own them as His people, and they would enjoy His presence and favor. The place that was to become the sphere of this relation between God and His people, must be prepared by cleansing that would obviate the allowance or appearance there of sin, or of men as sinners. It is evident that this notion may be applied to the heavenly things themselves, without imputing to them any previous defilement, or anything that made them less purely holy than God Himself. It is not only unnecessary, but in itself inadmissible to suppose :¹ that "the supramundane Holy of holies, the eternal, uncreated heaven of God Himself, though in itself untroubled blessedness and light, yet needed cleansing, in so far as its light of love had been lost or transmuted for mankind, through the presence of sin, or rather had been over-clouded and bedarkened by a fire of wrath." Men that are sinners are to approach God, and Christ as High Priest enters the heavenly sanctuary on their behalf. The place of that meeting must be prepared,² as the earthly copy was, by the cleansing of sacrifice.

Ver. 24. **For not into a holy place made with hands did Christ enter, an antitype of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us.**

The logical relation of the present statement to the foregoing verse, expressed by **For**, is, that it shows there was need for better sacrifices, inasmuch as Christ actually entered where the heavenly things themselves are, to do the priest's work for us that corresponded to what was done in the earthly Holies. For such functions, offering something is essential.³ He did not enter a holies made with hands, which would demand no better sacrifices ; He entered heaven itself to appear before the face of God, which did demand better.

It is not necessary to translate *ἁγία* = **holiest of all**, nor to suppose the Apostle means that, while using the word properly rendered **Holies**.⁴ According to the Apostle's own definition, ver.

¹ With Del., and Alford.

³ Comp. viii. 3.

² John xiv. 2.

⁴ Comp. on vers. 2, 8, 12.

2, it means the Holies. It was the earthly Holies made with hands that, while it had valid existence, was a parable representing that the way of the Holies, *i. e.*, the true Holies, was not made manifest.¹ The Apostle calls it **an antitype of the true Holies**, meaning that it is the correlative of the type of the true, as that type was shown to Moses in the mount. That correlative was executed in materials of handiwork. Into that antitype Christ did not enter. Nor does the Apostle say that He entered into the type of the true itself. He says He **entered into the heaven itself**; which corroborates our view at viii. 5, that it was not the very heaven itself, nor the actual heavenly things that Moses saw, but only a representation suitable for copying in earthly materials. **The heaven itself** is where God is, and *vice versa*, where God so is that being there one **appears before the face of God**, that is heaven itself. Entering the one, Christ appeared before the other. There seems to be no reason for attaching any difference in meaning to *ἐμφανισθῆναι* and *ὀφθῆσθαι* (ver. 28).² Both mean : **appear**, with no pregnant significance.³ But to appear **for us**, expresses a vicarious appearance, and thus priestly. And this involves appearing with sacrifice, when the appearing is before God. When this appearing is in heaven itself, *i. e.*, before the face of God, it is necessary that the sacrifice be corresponding, *i. e.*, better than when one entered the earthly Holies. The Apostle says **now** to appear; not in anticipation of the words immediately following: “nor yet that he should offer himself often,”⁴ etc.; and not with reference “to the new dispensation in contrast with the typical and shadowy past;”⁵ but in anticipation of the “appearing a second time” (ver 28), and in antithesis to that.⁶ As *ὀφθῆσθαι* intimates nothing about what Christ will do when he comes again, so the *ἐμφανισθῆναι* here expresses nothing as to what Christ does having gone to heaven;⁷ not even that he continually presents himself to God for us.⁸

Thus the present verse, connected with the foregoing by **For**,

¹ ver. 8

³ Comp. von Hof.

⁶ von Hof.

² Comp. LXX., Ex. xxiii. 17; 1 Sam. i. 22.

⁴ Against Alford.

⁷ von Hof.

⁵ Against Del.

⁸ Against Del., Alford.

applies the general statement, that for the heavenly things themselves better sacrifices are necessary, by declaring that Christ has entered there with a purpose that demands sacrifice; His *must* therefore be the better. To this he adds another statement that further illustrates how the sacrifice actually *is* better, as it of necessity must be.

Ver. 25. **Nor yet in order that he may offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holies year by year with other blood [than his own].**

Here it is affirmed, that Christ did not enter heaven in order that, *while there, as he is*, He may offer himself often in the fashion indicated in the comparison with the high priest. For such is the force of *προσφέρειν* in the present. This precludes the notion¹ that the Author presents the idea of Christ returning to earth often that He may often offer Himself a sacrifice, or often enter heaven to offer Himself in the presence of God. This notion is further precluded by the distinction noted at vii. 27, between *προσφέρειν*, which is used here, and *ἀναφέρειν*.² Did the Apostle mean here an often offering up of Himself as a sacrifice, and what was done on earth, he would use the latter word. By using the former he expresses what is done when the sacrifice has been made, viz., offering Himself to God, that He may be accepted.³ As the high priest did this with the blood when he entered the Holies, so Christ offered Himself when He entered heaven. Thus it is the idea of something, viz., offering Himself, *often done in heaven*, where Christ is, that is presented by *πολλάκις προσφέρειν*.⁴ This idea is presented to be repudiated, and thus to show that Christ actually deals with "better sacrifices" than were used for the copies of heavenly things, as ver. 23 affirmed, was necessary. Let it be noted, too, that the consistent meaning we ascertain by this precision in interpreting the language used, corroborates the explanation under ver. 23 of what is comprehended by the expression "better sacrifices." We see that in the present verse, which illustrates them, the Apostle has in view, not the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but what is done

¹ Of de Wette, Lün.

³ Comp. von Hof.

² Comp. on ver. 14.

⁴ So von. Hof, Del., Alford.

in consequence of it where he has appeared in the presence of God. As has been said, this is a plural notion.

The meaning ascertained by this precision serves, moreover, to show progress of thought in our passage, as compared with the representation of vii. 27. There the Apostle contrasts the one act of Christ in sacrificing Himself, with the oft repeated act of the high priests as it occurred year by year. Here the contrast concerns what Christ does, having made the sacrifices and entered heaven, and what the high priest does, having made his sacrifice and entered the Holies. The latter enters the Holies **with blood of another**, not his own.¹ This is said in contrast with Christ, who enters heaven by His own blood **offering himself**. And here again² it is needless to translate τὰ ἁγία = "Holy of holies," or to suppose that the Author means the Holy of holies, when using that word here. The high priest entered the Holies with the blood before he entered the Holy of holies. Part of what he did with the blood was done there. And it is as reasonable to mention the entrance into the Holies as including the thought of what He did in the Holy of holies, as to mention the latter including the thought of what He did in the former. Moreover, the account Lev. xvi. 15-19, especially ver. 17, shows, that on the day of atonement the whole tent was, for the time, regarded as one, and so partook of the sanctity of the holy place within the veil.

In what is now mentioned, viz., the frequent offering by the Levitical high priest of blood of another, in contrast with Christ's offering Himself, to point the necessity of better sacrifices for the heavenly things themselves, the Apostle broaches a topic that he will amplify further on.³

To the repudiated notion of Christ's offering Himself often, the Apostle adds a representation that is meant to show its impossibility by showing its absurdity. This appears in what would be a necessary condition of such repeated offering.

¹ The *ἐν* = **in**, with "is not instrumental, but elemental;" he enters furnished with, as it were, clad with "the blood of another" (Alford). This does not differ from the δὲ αἷμα ver. 12.

² Comp. on vers. 2, 8, 12, 34.

³ x. 1 sqq.

Ver. 26 *a*. **Since he must often have suffered from the foundation of the world.**

The hypothesis of Christ's offering Himself often, as the high priest did (which could only be done each time by a fresh sacrifice and that of beasts), demands, that, to this present period of His appearing before God (*νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι* ver. 24), during which this offering-often must take place, there must be a foregoing period when He had often **suffered** death. To correspond adequately, that foregoing period must have extended from the foundation of the world to when Christ entered heaven to offer Himself before God.¹ This obvious meaning of the present statement shows that it has no reference to Christ's sacrifice being valid for men in the past; as though the Apostle dealt with the notion that, for such validity, Christ must have suffered in each generation of the past in order to save men of each generation.² The Apostle simply clinches the statement of ver. 25, by another, that shows the impossibility of the contrary of that statement. He follows this by a comprehensive statement that affirms the precise truth concerning Christ's death.

Ver. 26 *b*. **But now once at the consummation of the ages hath he been manifested for abrogation of sin by his sacrifice.**

The *νῦν* = **now** is logical, not temporal, and means, "as things are in fact." **At the consummation of the ages** resumes the notion expressed by : **from the foundation of the world**; but does so in terms that intimate, as at i. 2, but more clearly, that the appearance of Christ concludes a period, and begins another to which the former tended, and for which the world waited. The Son is an epoch-making agent of God (i. 2). It is the period of the manifestation of Christ. *πεφανερωται* = **has been manifested**, refers to Christ's appearance in the history of the world; and the perfect expresses it as something that remains. Taken with the representation of ver. 28, it characterizes the period till Christ's second coming as one manifestation of Himself. Taken with the *ἅπας* = **once**, this idea is expressed with complete precision. The purpose (*εἰς*) of the manifestation is expressed to be : **for the abro-**

¹ So von Hof., Alford.

² Against Davidson.

gation of sin by his sacrifice. His sacrifice¹ has an emphasis. But not as meaning: "sacrifice of himself," as though we should read *αὐτοῦ*. It is an emphasis marking an antithesis between the repeated sacrifices referred to ver. 25 and what Christ did. The period of His manifestation is opposed to the whole foregoing period, and *His* sacrifice to all that went before. The effect of *His* sacrifice is that it abrogates sin.

And here we observe that the Apostle's argument forges another step in advance. At vers. 13, 14 he represented the efficacy of Christ's blood to be a deliverance final and everlasting, that cleansed the consciences of his readers from dead works, *i. e.*, from submission to the imposed ordinances of the flesh (ver. 10). Here he gives the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice its fullest expression. It abrogates sin itself. In this progress of thought we note the recurrence of the method the Author uses at vii. 11-19, Here, as there, he uses gentleness, and produces his extreme and comprehensive statement by degrees, which here, as there (vii. 18), is expressed by *ἀθρόως*, a word used no where else in the New Testament. The present statement sets forth the full effect of Christ's work. Taken with the first clause of our verse, it expresses that the suffering of Christ, by which is meant His death, is a sacrifice: that it is *His* sacrifice; that its efficacy in relation to Him is commensurate with His manifestation. That manifestation is **once** till He comes again; the sacrifice is one, and for all that period; which gives again the notion already expressed as: "once for all" (ver. 12). If the limited effect of Christ's blood that we found to be expressed at vers. 12, 14 seems to any a pitiful comprehension of the sense, here at length we have the whole grand truth. We think it looses nothing by the gentle approach to it. Especially if we put ourselves in the place of readers who were being led on "to full growth,"² and needed to be led by degrees.

The Apostle has not finished with the truth of the present statement by the mention in this verse. We observe that what follows x. 1-18 is amplification of it, and that, in fact, according to what we have observed to be his style, he has broached an

¹ von Hof., Del., Lün., Alford.

² vi. 1.

additional topic. For this reason, owing to its relation to what follows, as well as its relation to what immediately precedes, our ver. 26 *b* should be made a sentence by itself. The progress of thought is difficult to detect, as any one must feel who attempts to define the logical relation denoted by $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ = **for**, x. 1. The progress of that appears to be as follows :

At ver. 15 the Author presents a topic that he has amplified to the present. Its chief subject is the dying of Christ as his qualification for being mediator of a new covenant. This is represented in respect to two things: (*a*) his death for redemption of transgressions under the first covenant; and (*b*) his death that those called may receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance. To the present he has dealt with (*a*), viz., what relates to the covenant itself, showing that death is necessary to its validity (vers. 16, 17); that corresponding to what was true of the first covenant, so shedding blood was needed for the second (vers. 18-23); adding, or rather weaving into the latter, what shows that Christ dealt with better sacrifices, as His covenant and the things concerned were better than the first and its things (vers. 24-26). In all this he deals with the new covenant and its belongings or *materialia*, which he calls "the heavenly things themselves." From this he proceeds, ver. 27 to show (*b*), what relation Christ's death has to the *persons* that, are benefitted by the new covenant, whom He has designated as "those called," and how it secures to them the "promise of the everlasting inheritance." This he does with a $\kappa\alpha\iota$ = **and**, conjoining a statement concerning dying that comes in with a tone as if it resumed a topic after having cleared away misapprehensions about it. What we now read, may be read in close conjunction with ver. 15, if from that verse we leave out: "for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant.

It corroborates this view of the progress of thought in our context, to compare vii. 11-25,¹ where we noticed that the superiority of the Melchizedek priest to the Levitical priests is first set forth negatively (vii. 11-19), and then positively (vii. 20-25). And there, too, we observed, in ver. 19, a statement that relates both to what goes before and to what follows. Moreover, we

¹ See after vii. 19.

notice now, that the additional (positive) matter is conjoined there, as the transition is made here, by a καὶ καθ' ὅσον.

Having shown, then, the need of Christ's death in respect to His being mediator of a new covenant, and that He needed not to suffer often, the Apostle has declared that "Christ appeared once for abolishing sin by His sacrifice." By this comprehensive statement he both concludes the foregoing argument concerning the need of Christ's dying in respect to the covenant and its belongings, declaring that He died **once** (which as stated = "once for all") and he presents the topic of Christ's dying with respect to sins themselves. In other words, he comes back to the ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου = "so that a death having taken place," ver. 15, with the ground cleared in respect to "deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant," and is ready to interpret the effect of that death with reference to "them that are called," viz., that thereby they "receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance." This is effected by the "abrogation of sins."

Returning, thus, to the θανάτου γενομένου, he restates the topic in terms that resume the ground gained, and that also introduce another argument showing that Christ must die, and that His dying must be once. Thus far the logical connection pointed by Chrysostom is just, though too limited, when he comments: "Having shown that it was not necessary for Him to die often, he now shows that it was necessary for Him to die once."

Ver. 27. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that judgment, 28. So also Christ, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time without sin to them that wait for him, for salvation.

The chief thought of this representation must be found in the parallel that is expressed. Both *likeness* and *difference* appear in the parallel. The *likeness* is first. It is appointed unto men to die once, and then, as the next historical event for them, follows judgment. Time, and thus history, which involves change, has nothing to do with what comes between. The judgment will be according to the life as it was when death cut it short. Brief as the statement is, it most completely excludes every idea of anything occurring between death and judgment that can change or

modify the destiny of men, as determined by what they were previous to death. Neither anything that they shall be or do between death and judgment affects their case; nor will anything be done for them by another, *i. e.*, Christ. The latter notion is effectually excluded by what is said of Christ in the present parallel. The present is a convincing proof text against all doctrines and dreams of Restorationists. It is the more convincing, in that the truth in these respects is here expressed incidentally and not directly. The *likeness in the case of Christ*, is that He once died, here expressed by: **was offered to bear sins**; and then for Him the next historical event will be His **reappearing for salvation**. The *difference* is that necessary one between men who are sinners, and the sinless Redeemer. This makes the difference, that for the former is **reserved death and then judgment**. Ἀποκρίται = "laid by, reserved," and thus = "appointed," and thus the certain prospect. **Judgment** is meant here in an unfavorable sense,¹ owing to its mention in a connection that speaks of sins and salvation. *In the Redeemer the difference* appears in that death is in His case, not something reserved or laid up for Him as His due, but is an **offering of him for sins**; and the next event in history for Him is that He **will appear for salvation of many**, which salvation has its relation to the judgment mentioned, in that Christ will then accomplish for those saved their eternal inheritance, which they now have in promise.

In regard to: **having been offered to bear sins**, we may pause to notice the consistency of the use of προσφέρειν here in the passive with what was noted under vii. 27, and ver. 25.² This we will do in the words of von Hofmann, to whom we owed the observation. The quotation will give also the explanation of ἀναφέρειν as used here.

"Two words are chosen here intentionally that are only distinguished by their prepositions. Both words are used of sacrifice. But ἀναφέρειν ἀμαρτίας is something different from προσφέρειν ἁμαρτίας, and without doubt the Apostle has in mind Isa. liii. 12, where חַטָּאתֵינוּ נִשְׂאָה is translated by ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀφερχε. Neither there nor in general does ἀναφέρειν mean to 'bear away,'

¹ Against Alford, Del., etc.

² Against Alford.

or 'get rid of;' nor does it here;¹ but in both places it is related to *φέρειν* not differently from what *ἀναβάσσειν* is related to *βαστάζειν*. With the notion of *bearing* is conjoined the representation that the one bearing has what He bears above, on Himself. To bear the sin of another,² however, means to suffer as evil what he has sinned instead of the evil in which it is punished falling on himself. In this sense was Christ to bear the sins of many, thus to atone for them.³ In *προσφέρειν*, on the other hand, *φέρειν* is a bringing, as it is in *ἀναφέρειν*, when it is used of sacrifice. The same, of whom a *προσφέρειν* *ἑαυτὸν* has just been expressed, is now said *προσενεχθῆναι*.⁴ It has been supposed that the interchange of *παρέδωκεν* *ἑαυτὸν* and *παρεδόθη* may not be compared with this, because it is God to whom he is offered.⁵ But when we read Rom. viii. 32 : *τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν*, so *παρέδωκεν* is meant just as, Eph. v. 2, it is said of Christ *παρέδωκεν* *ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν*; the expression is borrowed from Abraham's sacrifice of his son. Thus there is no need of thinking⁶ of Christ being a victim of the violence of men and devils, instead of, as correlative of the *ἀποθάνειν*, what befell Him for God's sake;⁷ and moreover, the aim expressed after *προσενεχθῆναι* forbids it. On the other hand, the statement of the aim does not constrain us to understand *προσφέρειν* of the sending of Christ into the world.⁸ As at xi. 17, it is said of Abraham *προσενέγκεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ*, so here by *προσενεχθῆναι* is named that which befell Christ to the effect that He had to bear the sins of many. He was brought there where He should become His who had ordained Him to be an atoning sacrifice for sins. The beginning of His *προσφέρειν* *ἁμαρτίας*, however, preceded His *ἀναφέρειν* *ἁμαρτίας*. When God surrendered Him to the suffering that brought Him through death to God, our sins came to rest on Him in the form of the suffering wherewith He atoned for them. In antithesis to this, it is said of His coming again, that He will then appear **without sin**. Obviously, this cannot mean : 'without finding sin in existence.'⁹ Belong-

¹ Against Lün.² Comp. Num. xiv. 33.³ Comp. Del.⁴ Comp. 1 Cor. v. 7.⁵ So, e. g., Del., Maier, [Alford].⁶ As Del.⁷ As Del.⁸ Against Kurtz.⁹ Bleek.

ing to *ὀφθίσκεται*, it can only declare some thing of Himself. Neither can it mean that no sin shall dwell in Him, since the antithesis is not that the first time He was sinful, but that He had to bear the sins of others. In this antithesis, and in this only, and not when *ἀναφέρειν* is rendered 'to take away,' is **without sin** denial of such a burdening with sin as there took place where He atoned for guilt that others had contracted. With the once, when He was offered for this purpose, it was done. When He appears again, it will be to help out of all evil those that, in believing hope, expect Him."

When the Apostle says Christ was offered for the sins **of many**, we are not permitted to understand Him to mean many in contrast with a few,¹ nor that many is said for all, and as antithesis to one.² We have not the notion presented of Christ dying as one for many, but of Christ dying *once* for many. In an antithetical parallel that, on the one hand, represents men universally as having death in prospect and, on the other, Christ atoning for the sins of many, the nearest inference is that it is *not* intended to say that He atoned for all.³ Such is the interpretation of Chrysostom.⁴ It corroborates this view, that the Apostle immediately adds, that when Christ will appear for salvation, it will be **to those expecting him**. It were as reasonable to say that this latter expression "is the qualitative designation of *πάντων*"⁵ as to say that *πολλῶν* is. In entire consistency with Himself, when He says: "in bringing many sons to glory;"⁶ God made Christ perfect through suffering, and He became the author of salvation to them that obey Him;⁷ he says here: Christ was offered to bear the sins of many, and will, when He comes again, save those expecting Him. In so expressing himself, it is evident that the Apostle contemplates the atonement of Christ as meant for those who actually, and as the event will show, will benefit by it. And this is perfectly consistent with what we have observed to be his way of contemplating the promise of salvation and obtaining

¹ As Del., Alford. ² As Calvin who compares Rom. v. 15; Del., Alford.

³ Comp. ii. 10.

⁴ See in Alford the same view quoted as of Oec., Thl., and Thdrt.

⁵ Alford.

⁶ ii. 10.

⁷ v. 9.

it by faith.¹ We that believed enter into the promised rest.² But whether we are those that believed unto salvation, or are such as turn back to perdition,³ shall appear by our persevering. As the Apostle expresses it: "We are companions of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end."⁴

The Apostle proceeds in the exposition of his subject in a close connection of thought, to which the division of chapters does injustice. Though the coherence of what follows with what we have just considered is plain enough, it is difficult to detect the exact logical relation denoted by: **for**, ver. 1. But, by reference to the progress of thought in ix. 15–28, as presented above before ver. 27, it appears that great prominence has been given to the truth that (ver. 14): "by one offering, Christ perfected forever;" and with that has appeared (ix. 25) in contrast the frequent offerings of the Levitical high priest on the yearly recurrence of the day of atonement. Without affirming it, the truth has been implied, that what is so emphatically declared of Christ's sacrifice, is *not* true of those legal sacrifices. With this notion the **For** of ver 1, seems to connect, bringing in the reason. First the fact is affirmed, and then, as von Hofmann says we may expect, the fact is explained from the notion of the law and its offerings.

X. 1. For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never, year by year with the same sacrifices which they [viz., those approaching] offer forever, perfect those approaching.

We adhere in this translation to the Received text, as respects *δύναται* with Tisch., von Hof., Del., Alford, etc.; against W. and H., and the Revision of 1881.

It is **the law** that is here introduced for special remark, and, in antithesis to it, **the good things to come**. It should be noted and borne in mind, that it is not the Levitical high priest, and not in antithesis to the Saviour. By **the good things to come** the Apostle means the same as at ix. 11, where he calls Christ the High Priest of those things. Here, as there, they are designated as future with reference to the law, and not to the Apostle and

¹ See above after vi. 8.

² iv. 3.

³ x. 39.

⁴ iii. 14, comp. iii. 6.

his readers. What is directly affirmed of **the law** is, that it **cannot make perfect**. For **the law** is subject in this sentence, and *δύναται τελειῶσαι* is predicate. But the subject, **the law**, is qualified by a participial appositional clause that justifies what is predicated of it; and with the predicate is joined a clause defining the means relating to what is predicated; and the predicate itself is qualified in a certain way (**year by year . . . never**). All these demand scrutiny; and it must be very careful, seeing that, in every one of these particulars, expositors have differed in interpretation.

Bearing in mind that **the law** is the subject, and that the antithesis is not Christ, but **the good things to come**, *i. e.*, that have come, of which Christ has been declared to be the High Priest, we have it affirmed that the law has a **shadow** of the latter, and the precise meaning of this is further defined by the negative, **not the image**. The metaphor here is simply that of an image, (*e. g.*, a statue, which is the reality of the thing itself,) and the shadow it casts;¹ not an image or faithful representation (*εἰκῶν*) and a sketch or outline (*σχῆμα*) of that.² Thus *τῶν πραγμάτων* = **of the things**, is the genitive of apposition to *αὐτῇ τ. εἰκόνα*, or the genitive of the substance,³ and thereby are meant **the good things to come**. Remembering, as we ascertained at ix. 11 sqq., that **the good things to come** are what Christ obtained and the means whereby he obtained them, our present verse affirms, that the law has a shadow of them. This means that there *is likeness*, but not the thing itself. Added participially to the subject, it qualifies the latter so as to prepare for what is predicated of it, and so brings in a proof, drawn from the nature of the law, of what is predicated. *And this is one reason* why it cannot do what is desired of it. *A second reason* is, "that the law must bring about that which it is declared it is unable to do, *κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις αἷς προσφέρουσιν*; by which, however, it cannot be brought about. It is usual to connect *κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τ. θυσίαις* as if it said *τ. αὐταῖς κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν θυσίαις*, and to refer *εἰς τὸ διηνεκές* to *αἷς προσφέρουσιν*. The latter is absolutely impossi-

¹ So Del., von Hof., Alford, etc.

² Lün., etc.

³ Ebrard, Del., von Hof.

ble.¹ For εἰς τὸ διευχελεῖς does not mean 'continuously' or 'unceasingly' or 'ever and again,'² but, as the expression itself demands, and its use elsewhere shows,³ **forever**. When used with a transitive verb, the meaning can only be, that the action brings the object into a state in which it thereafter remains forever. Connected, then, with προσφέρειν θυσίας, it would say that the sacrifices once offered never again cease to be offered, and not, as it is rendered in the sense of διὰ παντός, that they are ever and again offered. It is objected, that αἷς προσφέρουσιν without εἰς τ. διευχελεῖς is without meaning. But such is only the case when καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν is joined in one with ταῖς ἀνταῖς θυσίαις (in a fashion supported by no comparable example), and thus are understood sacrifices that are every year the same, instead of letting the ταῖς ἀνταῖς have its proper connection with the following relative pronoun. By this it is left unexplained why the relative clause has a plural subject, while the subject of the principal sentence is ὁ νόμος. If, as has been assumed, the high priests are the subject of προσφέρουσιν, why are they not named. It is the more necessary to name them, seeing that the principal sentence has a plural object in τοὺς προσερχομένους that one might suppose is the subject of προσφέρουσιν. It is said, indeed, that this would be contrary to the terminology of the epistle, for οἱ προσερχόμενοι are the people, whereas, our epistle, without exception, uses προσφέρειν of the priestly offering. But the objection has no force. It would only then have force if the Apostle used a different expression for the sacrificing of the members of the congregation. But if the epistle elsewhere makes mention only of the sacrificing of the priests, so, the fact that it called *that* προσφέρειν, is no proof that thus the expression is limited to priestly sacrifice; an expression elsewhere used of all sacrifices without distinction.⁴ And if εἰς τὸ διευχελεῖς does not connect with αἷς προσφέρουσιν, and ταῖς θυσίαις does connect with the following relative

¹ See below against this.

² Against Bleek, de Wette, Ebrard, Del., Kurtz, etc.

³ Comp. vii. 3; x. 12, 14, and the examples in Del.

⁴ Comp. e. g. Matt. v. 23; viii. 4; Mark i. 44; Luke v. 14; Acts vii. 42; LXX., Lev. i. 2; ii. 1; iv. 23.

pronoun, then *προσφέρουσιν* cannot here be understood of priestly or rather high-priestly sacrificing, but must be understood to mean the sacrificing of the *προσερχόμενοι*, of those drawing nigh to God, **of those coming to God**. The Apostle, then, distinguishes what the law does and what the individual does. The law goes in action when it ordains sacrifices, which are *'ex officio'* to be brought regularly in the name of the people; on the other hand it is the affair of the individual to bring sacrifices when the need or occasion arises so to do. But the sacrifices are in both instances the same, sacrifices of beasts; and hence the law, with its sacrifices which come every year, can never in perpetuity make perfect those that go to God in prayer, never at all, in perpetuity so restore them that nothing shall lack to them for their relation to God. *In this a second thing is named that makes the law impotent to make perfect forever them that approach God, viz., its sacrifices are year by year with the same sacrifices which they* (the comers themselves) *offer*. Not because they are always the same sacrifices that are brought year by year on the day of atonement is the law thus impotent; but because what it does year by year, it does with the same offerings that the people individually bring on their own account. Some have correctly joined **year by year** to the verb, but then construed the thought thus: the law documents every year its impotence ever to make perfect, by this, viz., that, notwithstanding the many sacrifices brought all through the year, it always brings the same total of atoning sacrifices.¹ But this construction of *ταῖς ἀνταῖς* has nothing to do with the many sacrifices brought through the whole year; and the words do not say that the law proves its impotence annually; but that by what it does annually it is never able to do for those approaching what they need. On the one hand, its nature, and on the other the nature of its yearly sacrifices, viz., that they are not different from the sacrifices of the individual members of the congregation, make its incompetency in this respect. That is, the perfecting which the law should effect, must (if the yearly atonement could do that, which is denied) be an abiding effect, which would only be renewed annually. But

¹ So Ebrard, Del.

nothing of the kind comes about. For did it come about, then, because the general atonement of the law effected so much, the offering of those sacrifices which the annual atoning sacrifices resembled, would have ceased, because those serving God, once cleansed in conscience, would no longer have consciences accusing them of sin. For such, if we have correctly understood ver. 1, is the significance of the interrogative sentence :

Ver. 2. **Else would not they have ceased to be offered, on account of the worshippers having no more conscience of sins, having been once cleansed ?**

“The Apostle, according to the foregoing construction, can only mean, that the sacrificing of the individual members of the congregation would cease to be offered. And only this might have ceased, not the high-priestly sacrificing of the annual day of atonement, that the law ordained ; whose continuance or ceasing did not depend on individuals. Moreover, as the persons sacrificing are designated by *λατρεύοντας* (more properly rendered **those serving**, comp. above on viii. 5 ; and ix. 9, 14), we must understand the sacrificing to be that of the individuals, and not of the high priests. The objection that the sin-offerings of individuals were not left to their discretion, but were demanded by law,¹ is only amazing. Of course, whoever was conscious of being guilty of sin should bring a sin-offering ; but whether he would bring it rested with him. And if his consciousness of himself and of his relation to God was no consciousness of sin, no guilty conscience,² he could not be in a case either to be willing or to be able to bring a sin-offering. On the contrary, the command that ordained the day of atonement and its sacrifice remained in force. The objection that, in the case supposed, the law would have ordained only a single celebration of the day, and not the annual repetition of it,³ avails nothing, seeing that what is spoken of is, not ‘*de lege ferenda*,’ but ‘*de lege lata*.’ Moreover the execution of that command was by no means superfluous ; it would have ever again effected the atonement of the congregation and cleansing of the consciences of the members of the congregation, by virtue of which there would have been no need of sin-offerings

¹ So Del., Kurtz.

² Comp. Riehm, p. 566.

³ So Kurtz.

by individuals. Were it the meaning of the Apostle that the *annual* atoning sacrifices of the high priest would have ceased had they been able to cleanse the consciences of the individuals from sin; one must ask: how does he mean this? For the cleansing would, any way, only avail for those that for the time being constituted the congregation, and only for the sins so far committed. For the assertion that the Apostle assumes that the sacrifices that blot out sin-guilt would also have imparted the power henceforth to do the will of God,¹ avails nothing against this objection. The Apostle speaks of no other effect of the annual atoning sacrifices than what cleanses the conscience from the consciousness of sin-guilt. Did they have this effect, then the individuals would have had no more need to bring sin-offerings for themselves. For any further sinning on their part would be made good by the next annual atonement of the congregation. On the contrary, why there would be no need of the latter is not discernible.² Moreover, the Apostle does not say: that with *one* high-priestly atoning sacrifice the law is impotent to **make perfect forever** the members of the congregation; but that even **year by year it can never do this**; thus the annual observance of the law ordaining the day of atonement has never the effect on the individuals, that they stand forever in a perfect relation to God.

“To this answers the antithesis:

Ver. 3. **But in those [sacrifices] there is remembrance made of sins year by year.**

“But it is by no means a matter of indifference whether one takes this as the antithesis of ‘on account of the [ones] serving having no more conscience of sins,’³ or of: ‘is never able to perfect forever those approaching.’⁴ In the first case it is denied that those under the law serving God have no more a consciousness of guilt; and to this the affirmative sentence, that by those sacrifices there is made a remembrance of sins, does not correspond. For it does not say how it actually stands with those individuals; but what is the case regarding those annual sacrificial actions of which ver. 1 has said what the law is impotent

¹ So Riehm.

² Against Del.

³ So, *e. g.* Bleek, Lün., Del., Maier.

⁴ So, *e. g.* Kurtz.

to accomplish by them. Thus ἀλλά = **But**, stands in antithesis to the negative sentence, from which it is separated by the intervening ver. 2; and to the 'year by year,' with which the predicate of that sentence begins, corresponds the likewise accented: **year by year** at the end of ver. 3. Some inaptly render ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν: 'remembrance of sins lies in them.'¹ Joined with a substantive denoting action, ἐν τινι designates something in and by which such action takes place. The remembrance of sin does not lie in the sacrifices, but takes place in and by them; in that they are brought it takes place. It is, furthermore, erroneous to say² that: **by those** refers to the annual sacrifice. For then **year by year** would be redundant. It appears, thus, that by the expression: 'with the same sacrifices which they offer,' was not meant the annual atoning sacrifices as such, but the sacrifices as they are the same, both when offered on the annual day of atonement by the high priest as commanded, and when again and again they are offered by the individuals by their own impulse. What happens by them when they are offered annually is remembrance of sins; there is remembrance made that sins have been committed. [The Apostle has in mind the 'remembering sins no more' promised in Jeremiah, as quoted viii. 12, as appears by repeating the words below ver. 17.—Tr.] For that blood of bulls and goats takes away sins (takes away thence, where they lie on him that has committed them; which is not atonement of them,³ but is releasing from guilt and consciousness of guilt, whereas ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας said of God denotes forgiveness of sins)⁴ is, as a matter of course, an impossibility. Thus the Apostle says:

Ver. 4. **For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.**

"And thereby he shows that in ver. 1, as the connection there by **For** with the foregoing context gave reason to expect, he designated the nature of the annual atoning sacrifice as that which made it impossible for the law to bring about an abiding perfection. . . . Thus we see that the Apostle emphasizes the

¹ So, e. g., Bleek, de Wette, Del., Kurtz.

³ Against Del.

² As, e. g., Riehm, p. 502.

⁴ As LXX., Ex. xxxiv. 7.

nature of the yearly atoning sacrifices so much as the chief thing, that in contrast with it he gives effect to the totally different nature of Christ's sacrifice, by virtue of which *it has* brought about that which the other was not able to do." ¹

The foregoing interpretation of our verses, 1-4, which is von Hofmann's own, we have given at length in his own words, as he expounds it and defends it against objectors, because this seems due to him ; and because the interpretation is given in a way so complete and satisfactory, wherein it chiefly differs from the common view, that it seems impossible to improve it in substance. As to form, we fancy the reader will feel that it might be produced in expression easier to read. But we have thought it expedient to give the extract literally. *We are constrained*, however, *to dissent* from the construction that joins εἰς. τό διηνεκές = **forever**, to τελεῖωσαι = **perfect**. Nor is it essential to the chief point of the interpretation just given. Reason for concurring in the common construction, which translates : **which they offer forever**, are the following. The natural position of this qualifying adverbial phrase is after the verb. The Author (who alone uses it in the New Testament), uses this phrase four times (vii. 3 ; x. 1, 12, 14) ; and in the two instances where there is no possible ambiguity about it (vii. 3 ; x. 14), *that* is its position. The presumption, then, is, that in all four instances it qualifies the foregoing verb. It will appear to most readers simply inexplicable, or, as von Hofmann says of an objection, "amazing" how he can say this construction is impossible here, or that it *must* have the meaning he says it would have. Joined to a preterite it may have that force, as we think it does at ver. 12. But joined to a present tense that sense is impossible. Joined to προσφέρουσιν, it only furthers the chief point of the above interpretation, by characterizing the sacrifices of the individuals as something they go on offering forever, and thus emphasizes the notion brought in by the relative αἷς ; which needs something more than the verb προσφέρ, to give it prominence. To his own construction it is a weighty objection, that **never forever** is not only harsh and inelegant, but if not a redundancy, then it im-

¹ von Hof.

plies, that what is not done forever, *is* done for a period, viz., year by year. The Apostle, however, means that the law does not perfect at all (vii. 19); and this is sufficiently expressed by οὐδέποτε.

Leaving it to a foot note ¹ to justify our interpretation of what follows, we observe that the Apostle proceeds, in a dramatic style like that used at ii. 12, 13, to represent the consequences of what he has stated, vers. 1-4.

Ver. 5. **Wherefore coming into the world he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not, but a body didst thou prepare for me; 6. In whole burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hadst no pleasure; 7. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the roll of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.**

¹ Before we attempt the interpretation of the following vers. 5-10, it must be determined how the Apostle uses there the scriptural language Ps. xl. 6-8. The common view has been and is, that the words of the Psalm, as far as quoted, are a "word of prophecy, predicting the coming of the Son into the world, and expressing his mind and intention in his incarnate state." (Davidson.) Accordingly, it is supposed, that the Apostle appeals to those words, meaning thereby to show that even the Old Testament scriptures reveals the inadequacy of the legal sacrifices, and expresses the divine dissatisfaction with them, and the divine will to have something else. Moreover, as the Apostle puts these words into the lips of Christ, it is supposed that he teaches, that, in the truest sense, not David, but Christ was the original speaker of them, or, as Grotius says: *David sensu vulgari, Christus mystico*. This view, then, obliges the interpreter of our passage to refer to the original Psalm and verify the truth the Apostle is supposed to find in it and enforce by it. Difficulties are encountered at once. The citation is from the LXX., with slight variations. These variations are but a little difficulty, which may be explained in various ways. The present citation, in that respect, has importance only as a datum in the general question: whence are the New Testament citations of the Old Testament drawn? (Comp. Ed. Boehl. *Die Alttest Citata im Neuen Test.* Wien, 1878, p. 287 sqq. Toy: Quotations in the New Testament. Introduction § 1, I.) Then there is the difference between the Hebrew and the LXX. texts, the former reading: "mine ears hast thou opened [digged];" the latter reading as our quotation: "a body thou didst prepare for me." This presents no small difficulty, and its consideration involves the determination of the relation of the LXX. translation to the Hebrew original (see Toy, Quotations in the New Testament, p. 227), and of the question whether the LXX. is a final appeal. The problem presented by this difficulty prompts Delitzsch (*in loco*, translation of Clark's For. Theol. Library; comp., also, Alford) to write as follows: "In the version of LXX., which is also a monument of Old Testament

As the scriptural language here used is no quotation for proof or corroboration, we are not called on to comment on it as we must if the case were different. We fail to see any meaning or force of the words apart from the impression they make as they read here. The Apostle borrows language found Ps. xl. 6-8, putting it into the lips of Christ; as he is justified in doing, in

scripture, and as such regarded with reverence by the writers of the New Testament—a work not without traces of the influence of the divine spirit—this prophetic and typical character of the passage is yet more evident.” The perusal of such words makes one wonder how this way of exegesis differs from the Romish way of regarding the Vulgate as inspired, and thus as the final appeal in doctrine, rendering the original Hebrew and Greek superfluous. Then a comparison of the Psalm with our text shows that the thought is different in the two. Finally, the interpretation of the Psalm involves the question of its authorship; and whether it is David’s, “or, as may be the case, by some one belonging to a later time” (Davidson), becomes important (against Davidson; von Hof.).

All these observations, as they present difficulties, so they make it certain, that there must be much disagreement among those that consider them. They are all involved in the view that the Apostle, in using Old Testament language in our passage, does so as appealing to its authority in support of what he represents.

Confronted with such difficulties, we may very well ask the same question that was considered above with reference to i. 5 sqq. and ii. 12 sq.: *Does the Apostle here quote the Old Testament for proof or corroboration of what he represents?* We are not aware that any one has before proposed this inquiry here, any more than at the other passages just cited. At first sight this seems so unfavorable to mooted the question at all, that to do so can only be presumption. Yet, on second thought, it may encourage the inquiry. The universal assumption that the Apostle quotes the Old Testament for proof may itself be the presumption. It deserves to be proved. For not all quotation of Old Testament scripture in the New is for the purpose of proof. The Virgin’s song reproduces the language of Hannah’s song with no such purpose. (Comp. also Rom. iii. 4 a; x. 6-8, 18; xi. 34; xv. 21; 1 Cor. i. 20 [Isa. xxxiii. 18]; ii. 16; xv. 32, etc.) We should say, that in every instance of such quotation, the first question is: with what intent is the language used? In most instances the purpose is so obviously an appeal for proof, that one does not think of making this inquiry, that should be first. This fact may encourage the presumption that in every case the intent is the same. It is easy to pass from presumption to assumption, without inquiry or reflection. We think such has been the process in regard to the Old Testament quotations in our epistle.

When we put the question: is this a quotation for proof? all the evidences before us are against the notion, and nothing is left to encourage it but the assumption on the ground that that is the common use of such quotations.

view of the scripture authority quoted viii. 8-12, and the truth that Christ is Mediator of the new covenant as there promised. He proceeds by *διό* = **wherefore**, which sets the present representation as a consequence of the immediately foregoing representation ver. 1-4. That representation is, that the law, by reason of its very nature (*[α]*) because a shadow of the good things to come,

First of all, and of most importance, is the noticeable difference in the manner of this quotation and that which follows vers. 15-18. The latter leaves us in no doubt as to the intent of quoting. By saying: "the Holy Spirit testifies to us," the Apostle expressly intimates that he appeals to the scripture in question in proof of what he represents. Moreover, what he concludes from it is manifestly a just and obvious inference from the language in its original context. It therefore corresponds to the purpose for which it is used. That a quotation *is* proof is reason for believing it is used for proof. But this reason fails in the passage before us, at least as a self-evident thing, as does also the express *intimation* that it is used for proof, such as we notice in vers. 15-18. We observe, then, that the Author knows how to make it evident that he appeals to scripture for proof when he does so. When he omits to do so, we may suppose he uses scripture language without that purpose. We have noticed the same thing above (see after iii. 7), in a comparison of the scripture language used at ii. 12, 13, with that quoted iii. 7-11.

Again we notice that the language before us is introduced (vers. 5-7) in the same fashion as at i. 5-13 and ii. 12, 13. But there is here the striking difference, that vers. 8-10 expound the language put into the lips of Christ. This seems to afford a presumption that the language in question is treated as proof of the thing concluded, (so claimed by Riehm p. 186); and we would be obliged to take it so if it *did* prove this conclusion. But we observe that it has the force expressed in the inference ver. 9, only as it is put into the mouth of Christ, and not in the least as it is found in Ps. xl. 6-8. In the Psalm what is meant is, that God wants no *mere* sacrifices, etc., *of the speaker*; our quotation is so expressed, vers. 5, 6, and interpreted ver. 8 as to mean, that God wants no sacrifices *from any one*; he wills them not to be because he has no pleasure in them. This is effected by the Author using *οὐκ ἠδόκησας* = **hadst no pleasure** for the LXX. *οὐκ ᾔτησας* = **didst not ask for**. This cannot be called "a substitution without a change of sense" (against Del.), seeing it gives precisely the effect that is made plainer by the paraphrase in ver. 8, where *οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδὲ ἠδόκησας*, predicated of the whole list of sacrifices, etc., expresses that God wills they shall not be because he has no pleasure in them.

The Psalm conveys the meaning: "Since ceremonies of the law are worthless when divorced from habitual obedience, instead of offering mere sacrifice, I offer myself to do whatever is prescribed for me in the written revelation of thy will." (J. A. Alexander on Ps. xl. 7, comp. Hengstenberg.) The language of our quotation gives the meaning, that God wills that sacrifices, etc., as things displeasing to him, shall not be; and the speaker says so as pronouncing

and [b] because it ordained annual sacrifices that were only the same as those that individuals brought as often as they sinned) could never, year by year, make those serving God perfect. **Wherefore**, he adds, Christ, when He came, came with the intent and effect now described. There is no need of searching for the subject of **he saith**, or justifying the failure to name the subject. Other Apostles beside John¹ may presume to be understood as meaning Christ when what is said is obviously of Him. **Coming into the world** (εἰσερχόμενος) expresses, in the most general way,² the notion of entering into the sphere of worldly existence. *This preface gives a significance to what follows that it could not have without it.* We must not overlook its effect, as seems to be common with expositors, who find a meaning in what follows that

their abrogation. The "will" that "he comes to do," is not something in the sense, that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22), (against von Hof.), but something that *takes the place* of sacrifices, and that God *does* will and with which he is pleased, *i. e.*, a better sacrifice than that of beasts, *but a sacrifice still*. The words in the Psalm therefore do not in the least justify the inference that sacrifices, etc., is taken away, and obedience to be given instead. But the words of our quotation, as put into the lips of Christ by the preface: "when he cometh into the world," a very essential part of the representation, do justify the inference that is drawn ver. 9, *b*.

If, then, as a quotation, *i. e.*, in the sense the words have in their original context, the language employed is no proof of what the Author makes it express, we are not justified in supposing he means it so, in the absence of a formal expression on his part to that effect, such as he uses ver. 15. And this must be true notwithstanding the interpretation and application of vers. 8-10 that afford a presumption to the contrary.

Von Hofmann says: "Is the quoted or rather adapted scripture passage an expression of the mental disposition with which Christ came into the world," (comp Del.), though he has labored to show that the passage in the Psalm itself has a meaning appropriate to the use the Author makes of it. But it is manifest that we must go further and understand, as at i. 5-13; ii. 12, 13, that the Apostle uses scripture language to clothe his own thought, and again uses a dramatic way to represent the intent and effect of Christ's coming into the world. Assuming that the Apostle might dramatically introduce Christ as speaking and acting, we must expect him to put scriptural words into his lips. For the present purpose there was much to choose from, (Lün., Alford refer to Ps. i. 7-15; ii. 18 sq.; Isa. i. 11; Jer. vi. 20; vii. 21-23; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21 sqq.; Mic. vi. 6-3.) Yet nothing could be so appropriate as the language actually used for this purpose.

¹ Comp. all 1 John, especially iii. 2.

² John i. 9.

they could find as well without this preface, and even better if the preface read: "wherefore speaking in David." The preface, as it is, intentionally characterizes the spirit in which the scripture language that follows is used. It was not when the Psalm was written that the following is conceived as said. Nor is it as David is represented saying what he said (viz., "then said I," etc.) in some period of his life under a special experience.¹ But Christ is represented speaking thus as He comes into the world. And not merely what David declares he said, does Christ say; *but He says all the language quoted*. What is meant is, that the language quoted expresses God's intent, and that, by coming and saying that language, Christ gives effect to the intention. In the quoted words we have *the intention* expressed. In: **sacrifices . . . thou wouldest** [willedst] **not**, *θέλειν* has its strongest meaning = "to decree,"² as appears from the following *τὸ θέλημα σου* (vers. 7, 9), and the *ἐν ᾧ θέληματι* (ver. 10). Thus the meaning is, that God wills the sacrifices not to be. To represent this relation of verb and substantive we have translated: "willedst." The words of vers. 5, 6, put into the lips of Christ represent Him as expressing the will of God, and, thus bringing with Him, as He comes into the world, the sentence that abrogates the legal sacrifices, etc. In antithesis (*δέ*) he says: **but a body thou didst prepare for me**. We are not concerned with the question of how these words may be a translation or interpretation of the original Hebrew that reads so differently. Our only business is with them as they appear here. If this is thought to be too narrow a view, it is, any way, better than that method which expends many words on the critical question, and not one on the relation of the words in their present context.³ Did these words serve no purpose in the context,⁴ we may assume that the Apostle would have omitted them, as he omits *ὁ θεός μου, ἡ βουλή σου*, and otherwise changes the original words. As for the view, that "this argument might have been made without the quotations,

¹ Comp. von Hof., *Schriftbew* II., i. 6, 1853.

² See Grimm's *Lex. sub voc.*; comp. John xvii. 24; Rom. vii. 19; ix. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 18.

³ As, e. g., Alford.

⁴ So von Hof.

but a desirable support from the Old Testament seemed to the Author to be presented in the LXX. phrase, 'a body thou hast prepared me,'"¹ it can only occur to one that is blind to the integrity and spirit of truthfulness that breathes in every line of this epistle. In ver. 10, when he makes the application, the Author shows that the present words are intentionally used with the rest that he puts into the lips of Christ. And that application shows, as does the antithetical form of our clause, that the **body** is contrasted with the **sacrifices**, etc., and saying that God **prepared it** (κατηρτίσω middle="prepared for thyself")² expresses that it is something God does will, and thus is well pleased with it, and means it to be instead of the other. The expression of this in the aorist is no ground for supposing that the time of saying this, and thus **the coming into the world**, must be understood of some period after Christ's entry into the world, say of His entering on his ministry.³ The dramatic manner of the representation warrants no such analysis. The present tenses λέγει and λέγων, vers. 5, 8, ἀναίρει, στήσῃ ver. 9, adjust the sense of the whole representation.

In verse 6 the Apostle writes: **whole burnt-offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hadst no pleasure in**, wherein he substitutes: **thou hadst no pleasure for**: "thou didst not ask for" which is in the LXX. Instead of supposing his MS. read as he quotes,⁴ it is more reasonable to think he chooses his word on purpose. He thereby expresses something stronger, and represents **sacrifices for sin**, etc., as displeasing⁵ to God; and thus expresses the reason why God wills them not to be.

In ver. 7, in the same intentional way, the Apostle changes the language of the original so as to connect τοῦ ποιῆσαι with ἦλθω, thereby expressing that Christ said: **I am come to do thy will**. What that will is, must be expressed in the words of vers. 5, 6. **For: in the roll of the book it is written of me**, is without emphasis here, as the explanation of ver. 8, 9, shows by omitting to remark on it; and if it has any meaning, it must be, not, as in the Psalm, that the will to be done is written there, but that *there*

¹ Toy, p. 227.² See Grimm's Lex., *sub voc.*; comp. Matt. xxi. 16.³ So de Wette, Alford.⁴ So Alford.⁵ Comp. ver. 38; 1 Cor. x. 5.

is written what expresses that Christ comes to do God's will. And such, we suppose, is the meaning. As the present words intimate, that those of vers. 5, 6, express the will of God, they require us to interpret the latter as we have done, viz., as expressive, not merely of a sentiment of God toward **sacrifices**, etc., and regarding the **body he prepared**, but of His will, viz., willing that the former should not be and that the latter should be instead. Coming into the world Christ says: such was God's will; and that He said He is come to do it.

In respect to doctrine, we may pause to remark, that while the present representation admits of no analysis that would define when these things were said, and what epoch or point of Christ's history is intended by the expression: **coming into the world**, there can be no doubt that the expression involves the doctrine (a) of the pre-existence of Christ, and (b), that coming into the world, He did so with the clearest intelligence of what His mission was to be, and (c) that especially it was His mission, which He made His own will, to offer His body a sacrifice for sin, and (d) that thereby the old covenant with its sacrifice was to be replaced by the new covenant with its one sacrifice of Himself as the atonement for sins.

The Apostle comments on the representation just given, interpreting *the effect*. The intention has been expressed in the quoted language: "sacrifices and offering . . . to do thy will," expressed in the aorist. The interpretation expresses, that effect was given to the intention or will by Christ's **saying** it, by which λέγων = **saying** is meant the whole notion "coming into the world He says." So coming and:

Ver. 8. **Saying above, that¹ sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and [sacrifices] for sins thou willedst not neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), 9. then he hath said, Lo, I am come to do thy will, the effect is as expressed in the following clause: he takes away the first that he may establish the second.**

In reproducing the quoted language, the Author does so in a more convenient form for his purpose, bringing all that is the

¹ ὅτι untranslated in versions 1611, 1881.

name for sacrifices and offerings together, to be the antithesis of the words : **then he hath said**, etc. Moreover he says : **sacrifices and offerings**, in the plural, and not in the singular as above.¹

These changes that *are* made forbid our assuming : “that the writer prefers, instead of the simpler and more regular *ἀνώτερον εἰπὼν* . . . *ὑστερον λέγει*, to write *ἀνώτ. λέγων* . . . *τότε ἐξηκεν*,” because “he is more concerned to emphasize the internal connection of the utterances than their temporal sequence.”² It is evident that the Author writes exactly as he intended, and that he makes the changes that suit his precise meaning. He makes another, substituting **he hath said** (*ἐξηκεν*), for the **I said** (*εἶπον*) of ver. 7. But this is merely resumption of the latter in the manner that is proper after the recitative *ὅτι* = **that**. For here, as above, vers. 5-7, what Christ is represented as saying is all the scriptural language quoted, and the recitative *ὅτι* extends over all. This *ὅτι* is commonly overlooked and its force missed ; as witness versions 1611, 1881. In reciting what Christ says concerning **sacrifices**, etc., the Apostle adds a comment which points the reference of what is now represented to the general argument of which it forms a part. **Which are offered according to the law**. The *αἵτινες* = **which**, is not the simple relative that identifies ; but one that classifies ; and what the Apostle calls attention to is, that the **sacrifices**, etc., so spoken of are the very things in question in the whole context from ver. 1. He says, in effect, ordained by law though they were, such was God’s purpose concerning them.

The Author continues the recitation of the words Christ has been represented as saying : **Then he has said** ; and these words, for reasons given above, are not to be taken as the Author’s and as forming the antithesis of : **saying above**.³ The saying of both the one and the other in that relation which has been called : **coming into the world** puts the case that the Apostle proceeds to interpret. “Coming into the world and saying” presents one in

¹ The received text repeats the words in the singular. But the plurals are generally adopted as the correct text.

² Del., similarly Lün.

³ Against Lün., Del.

the posture of acting, and the action intended is denoted by what is said. It gives effect to the intention expressed when Christ comes speaking so. What that effect is is expressed: **he takes away the first that he may establish the second.**

These words are not a conclusion, nor are they a parenthesis, leaving ver. 10 with ἐν ᾧ ἠελημυαται to connect closely with τὸ θελημα σου.¹ It is the proper predicate of the subject λεγων x. τ. λ. ver. 8; and what is expressed is predicated of that subject, i. e., Christ as He is represented, viz., as one coming into the world saying the words put into His lips. It interprets the action. The action is one "will," with two correlative effects. The doing of one is in order to the doing of the other, which is impossible without it. That doing God's will, here expressed as: **thy will**, does not refer *only* to taking away the sacrifices, etc., is plain from the naming of **the second** that is established. Yet, that the taking away sacrifices, etc., *is* in part doing the will of God in question is obvious. What, then, is **the second** that Christ establishes. The context only offers: "a body thou didst prepare (thyself) for me;" expressed in antithesis to the "sacrifice," etc. It was *that* which Christ established, viz., in the sense that His body was made the sacrifice instead of the sacrifices, etc., that are taken away. As a sacrifice it is established, for it remains, and beside it there remains no other (ver. 26). That such is the meaning involved in: **he establishes the second**, is made plain by the Apostle himself in ver. 10. He reverses the expression of it in order to combine it with a comprehensive statement.

Ver. 10. **By which will we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

We have seen above that in what is said concerning sacrifices, etc., and concerning what Christ would do as the will of God, the latter is not represented as the will of God in a way distinct from the other being the will of God also. And what has been represented is not that Christ instead of sacrifices, etc., does the will of God² in the sense that, to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22). The abrogation of sacrifices ("the first") and the establishing of Christ's sacrifice (ix 26) instead ("the

¹ So Lün.

² Against Ebrard, von Hof.

second ") *was one will*. This double intention expressed in the language adopted from Ps. xl., and the double effect accomplished by Christ in coming into the world and saying the language, is the will referred to by : **which will**. The expression, therefore, has nothing to do either exclusively with the notion that it was the will of God that Christ should suffer to atone for the world, or with the notion that it was the will of God that Christ should obey in general the divine commands and be holy.¹ Nor are we called upon to mediate these notions, and show that the latter was the condition of the former.² This interpretation comes from assuming, that, in using the words of Ps. xl., the Apostle intends a parallel with the experience and expressions of David. By the will of God the sacrifices according to the law were taken away by Christ, and His sacrifice established instead, and we have been sanctified by the latter. Let it be noted that προσφορά is not **offering** as an act; but the *thing offered*, as at ver. 5, and thus σώματος is genitive of apposition.³ The text says : **once for all** in a construction that leaves it doubtful whether it expresses that Christ's body was offered once for all, or whether we are sanctified once for all. The order of thought, however, as well as the position of ἐφάπαξ, makes it likely that the thing stated is, that Christ's body was offered once for all.⁴ For the point is, that God wills our sanctification, not by legal sacrifices which are abrogated, but by the sacrifice of Christ's body. And while affirming the latter, the Apostle adds, that this offering was made once for all, which thought he restates ver. 12 in the most precise manner. Moreover, sanctification, in our Author's sense, being a setting over to God from a condition that is not that, involves the notion of something done forever, and thus adding to it : "once for all," would be redundant.

We have been sanctified is not meant to express a benefit actually experienced in the persons of the Apostle and his readers, but what was achieved when the offering of Christ was finished. When the priest has done all that it is the priest's part to do, then he has sanctified those concerned. And to those concerned,

¹ Against Ebrard.² Against Alford.³ So von Hof., against Del.⁴ So Alford; against Del., Lün., von Hof.

whether they are believers, or with a view to making them believers, it may be said, pointing to the priest's work : by that we have been sanctified. The Author's discourse is concentrated on the representation of Christ's work, not on the expression of the actual experience of its benefits. Unless this is kept in mind, there must be misapprehension of much that is here taught.¹

The Apostle names the Redeemer here Jesus Christ ; and this, we may suppose, is because the reference to His body offered as a sacrifice concerns Christ in the flesh, *i. e.*, in His earthly life having come into the world, in which condition His name was Jesus. It is to be noted, that in what the Apostle now affirms, he uses the first person plural. It is something that concerns him as well as others. At ix. 14, we observed that he used the second person plural, as speaking of something that did not concern him.

In what has just been represented vers. 1-10, the Apostle has brought in the mention of the sacrifices that individuals offered : "the same sacrifices which they bring," *scil.*, they who approach God. This he does with the intent to show the impotency of the law with its *sacrifices*, and, in contrast, the potency of the one sacrifice of Christ's body offered by the will of God. Thus the effect is expressed in the passive "we have been sanctified," confining the thought to the efficiency of the *sacrifice*. But the notion of sacrifice is incomplete without the priest. The effect of the sacrifice is not in itself, but is the doing of the priest that offers it, and, in fact, the priest is superior to the sacrifice. Accordingly, as the complement of the foregoing representation vers. 1-10, the Apostle proceeds to speak of the *priests* concerned in the offerings that have been mentioned, and, in contrast, to affirm the virtue of Christ's priestly act. The point is expressed ver. 14 : "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," in which is said, not what the sacrifice effects, but what *he, the priest*, does by his sacrifice. Such we understand to be the progress of thought ; and therein we find the justification of the *ἐπεὶ* of the Text Recept. against the *ἀρχιερεὺς* preferred by some. This thought is appropriately conjoined by **And**.

¹ Comp. below on ver. 29.

Ver. 11. **And every priest, indeed, standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never divest of sins.**

We retain *ιερεὺς* = **priest**, according to the Received text, with Treg., Tisch. viii., W. and H.; *「ιερεὺς」*, Del., von Hof., Ebrard, etc.; against Bleek, Lün., Alford, Lach.

It is of *priests*, and not of high priests, that the Apostle speaks here, in order to present the contrast with Christ as Priest. As at v. 1—viii. 3 he appeals to what is true of every high priest, so here he appeals to what is true of every priest; but now to point a contrast, not a resemblance. He **stands**, makes the impression of being an antithesis to **sat down**, ver. 12. It is, however, if so, without emphasis. The contrasted thoughts are, a service that does not cease, and one that does. The two expressions are the convenient ones to use along with the rest of the language that represents this. Two things are mentioned of the priest (*a*) **he ministers day by day**, (*b*) **and offers often the same sacrifices**. The next clause is not a third thing added to the foregoing,¹ but (as the *αἰτίαι*, properly interpreted, shows) a reiteration of the character of the sacrifices preparatory to predicated what follows. **The which sacrifices can never divest of sin**, says the Apostle, using the word *περιελεῖν*, which occurs only thrice beside in the New Testament.² Here the sacrifices are named as **the same**, meaning the same every day, and *described* by *αἰτίαι*, etc., which classifies them as to their nature. At ver. 1, “the same” are *defined* by *αἷς* as those which are offered by those approaching God. Presenting the contrast, the Apostle says :

Ver. 12. **But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God :**

Here, for reasons already given at ver. 1, we join *εἰς τὸ διηνεχές* = **forever** to the foregoing verb,³ and understand the Apostle to describe the sacrifice of Christ as a thing done forever. In

¹ With von Hof.; against Del.

² Acts xxvii. 20, 40; 2 Cor. iii. 16.

³ See in Alford the vote of expositors, which balances pretty equally, as do also his own representations, when choosing the connection with the following verb.

favor of this is, that it expresses an appropriate antithesis to the **sacrificing often** of the Levitical priest. Against the rendering : **sat down forever**, is to be objected, that it cannot be the aim of the Apostle to bring in anything to prove that Christ's offering *could* not be offered again, seeing this has been proved before, and has again and again been used as something ascertained. Thus a chief reason for the construction objected to falls to the ground. Moreover, it is not said in Ps. cx. : "sit on my right hand" *forever*, but "sit . . until I make," etc.; and this the Apostle repeats from the Psalm. Making the **sit until** a "sitting forever," is too considerable an addition, for even the Apostle to make without some unambiguous expression of it. The : "thou art a priest forever," of the Psalm does not add the notion "forever" to "sitting at the right hand," either in the Psalm or in the use the Apostle makes of it. Furthermore, the rendering : "sat down forever," suggests, though needlessly indeed, a conflict with 1 Cor. xx. 25-28. But, though there would be no conflict, we may assume that the Author would not express himself in a way to occasion the mistake.

Instead of many sacrifices, is the one sacrifice ; instead of a perpetual ministry that needs standing to it continually, is a finished work done forever, after which, He who did it sat down at God's right hand ;¹ instead of sacrifices that could never divest of sins, is one sacrifice, that perfects forever, as is declared in ver. 14. But before giving expression to this, the capital thought, the Apostle, using the words of Ps. cx. : already quoted amplifies the notion : **sitting at the right hand of God**.

Ver. 13. **Henceforth, waiting till his enemies be made his footstool.**

It is a frequent mistake to suppose² that these words express the object of the waiting, in the sense, that while waiting, the subjection of the enemies is to take place. Thus ἐκδεχόμενος is rendered : "expecting ;"³ and a supposed conflict is pointed out between the representation here and 1 Cor. xv. 25-28 ;⁴ as in the latter place the destruction of Christ's enemies is placed after

¹ i. 13 ; Ps. cx. 1.

² Versions of 1611, 1881.

² As Lün.

⁴ So Lün.

His second coming. But ἐκδεχ. here means **waiting**.¹ And the Apostle does not describe *what* Christ waits for or expects, as if His activity, or at least His thoughts turned into a new channel. We have a previous representation that forbids that, viz., that He is minister of the Holies in heaven itself (viii. 1, 2). What *is* described is, the session at the right hand in respect to its duration (τὸ λοιπόν is temporal, and not material, or expressive of the object),² and thus the completeness of Christ's cessation from further sacrifice. The reference to His enemies becoming His footstool both marks the limit when there shall be a change from waiting, and enhances the notion of His certainly no more offering the same sacrifice, by reminding the readers of the nature of the next coming into the world. It will be, according to the uniform Christian belief, to see His enemies made His footstool. This presents the strongest possible contrast between the time when He first came and offered the sacrifice of Himself and before His sitting at the right hand, and the time when He comes again.³ The representation, according to this view, is like that ix. 28, differing only in the thing that characterizes the next coming into the world. At ix. 28 the second appearing is characterized as being in order to save those expecting Him. Here it is designated as the period when His enemies shall be made His footstool. But the contrast just noted does not seem to explain adequately this mention of the threatening nature of the event that follows the sitting at the right hand. If *only* the impossibility of coming again to offer Himself a sacrifice be the notion, why not point to the milder and cheering prospect pointed to ix. 28? We think the present form is chosen to suggest a warning similar to those that have interrupted the discourse ii. 1-3; (where see the long note) iii. 7-19; vi. 4-8, and that are sounded again x. 26-31; xii. 25-27. It is significant that in Acts ii. 34, 35, the Apostle Peter quotes the same Psalm-text, and then follows it with the warning: "save yourselves from this crooked generation" (ver. 40) as if that generation comprised the enemies that were to be made the footstool. The present mention seems to say: Beware of ignoring what this priest has

¹ Comp. Del., Alford, von Hof.² von Hof.³ Comp. von Hof.

done so completely. It is an echo of the : "How shall we escape having neglected so great salvation?" It touches the note that is sounded more clearly in vers. 26-31. It says: Look to the finished work of this High Priest for salvation, or look to be counted among His enemies when He comes to deal with them in the spirit of Luke xix. 27: "But those mine enemies," etc.

To the representation that Christ, having sacrificed once, ceased so completely as described, the Apostle adds a statement that explains it.

Ver. 14. **For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.**

The work was complete and needed no repetition. What was once done made him a perfect saviour.¹ In the same sense, in respect to those to be saved, it **perfected them forever**. We have noted that our verses 11-14 relate to the *priest's* part in the sacrifices. When the priest has done his part, he has accomplished all that the sacrifice can do. As far as sacrifice can do it, he has perfected those offering it. Christ's sacrifice does perfect. Having made it, **he has perfected forever**. This is expressed as a thing accomplished with reference to *Christ's* performance, not with reference to our partaking of the effect of it. In other words, we may not regard: by one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified, and: by one offering they that are sanctified *were* perfected, as a personal experience, *scil.* were, then, when the offering was made, as convertible expressions.² They that are sanctified are perfected only when they have been sanctified personally, which must be an individual affair, and fall within the individual's history. But perfection *when* attained is by means of what Christ did when he suffered. He then perfected all: he has perfected and does nothing more to perfect. He has done all that sacrifice does.

The present context, using *τελειόω* vers. 1, 14, and *ἀγιάζω* vers. 10, 14, invites us to define their meaning. Our ver. 14 shows that they are not synonymous, and that **sanctifying** precedes **perfecting**. Taking ver. 10 with ver. 14, it appears that both sanctifying and perfecting are by means of the one offering of

¹ ii. 10; v. 9.

² Comp. on ver. 29.

Christ's body. At ii. 11 we have it expressed, that they who are sanctified are sanctified by Christ. At the same time they are called "the sanctified," not with reference to qualifications found in themselves, and what they do, but with reference to the purpose of God respecting them, and what he does. His purpose is denoted by the expression: "in bringing many sons to glory;" and the effect is expressed by: "sons," and by saying that they and their Sanctifier: "are all of one." Agreeably to this, we have found that "sanctify" has its usual meaning in the Old and New Testaments, viz., being made holy, *i. e.*, set over to God as his. The agent of this is Christ, and the means is his suffering. "To perfect" does not mean to endow with all excellent qualities, but to bring to the 'end,' that is, the appropriate end, or that which corresponds to the idea. Hence it is a relative term, and may be used of bringing to completion within a variety of spheres."¹ Said of Christ (ii. 10; v. 9), who said: "I sanctify myself,"² "to perfect" means to accomplish that which made Him what he was set apart to be, viz., a fully qualified Saviour. Said of those that are saved, "to perfect" means that, having been sanctified, they are in reality made to correspond to the idea, or the relation to which they have been set apart, as belonging to God. This is by divesting them of sin (ver. 11) in that way which is accomplished by sacrifice. This is not by imparting to them inward holiness,³ but by forgiveness, so that, no longer regarded as sinners, they are in a perfect relation to God, wherein they may come to him and serve him with boldness. As this was represented under the law by sacrifices that could not make perfect, and by what needed often to be renewed, "perfecting" was a notion that did not in itself involve once-for-allness, or foreverness. If, then, the perfecting accomplished by Christ's sacrifice is a perfecting forever, needing no renewal, it needed to be clearly stated. Hence the reiteration of the notion: "perfect forever." As has been noted, "to sanctify," being to set over to God, involves the notion of being done once for all and thus forever, and does not admit of degrees; so that to qualify it by "perfectly" or "forever" is a redundancy. But ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς

¹ Davidson.² John xvii. 17.³ Against Del. on vers. 10, 14.

ὁλοτελεσις = "sanctify you wholly" ¹ is no redundancy, but suitable emphasis, to express that all, and not a part must be sanctified.

The perfect relation, thus established is the anterior condition of all that makes one inwardly and subjectively what one must be to enjoy the communion of God. The latter is found in approaching God and obtaining the blessing that makes one such. It is only consummated when Christ comes again for salvation, and when the eternal inheritance is received.²

The Apostle finally appeals to scripture, viz., the words of Jeremiah xxxi. which he has used with such effect viii. 8-12, using now only as much as suits his purpose. He also modifies that for no other reason we may suppose, than to present briefly what is to his purposes.

Ver. 15. And also the Holy Spirit beareth witness to us; for after having said: 16. This is the covenant which I will covenant with them after those days, the Lord says: putting my laws on their hearts, and on their mind I will write them. 17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18. Now where remission of these is, is no longer offering for sin.

By *μαρτυρεῖ ἡμῖν* = bears witness to us, we must understand the Apostle to mean that the Holy Spirit supports and corroborates his, the Apostle's representation.³ For in the New Testament *μαρτυρεῖν* with the dative of the person has this meaning, and not the sense of "declaring to."⁴ With this meaning, the *ἡμῖν* means the Apostle and teachers of the truth like himself. With this interpretation there is felt to be no elision of what is the testimony of the Spirit, and less awkwardness appears in the following quotation, than with the interpretation we reject.

The scripture language used here was quoted at viii. 8-12 as the word of God. Here it is referred to as the testimony of the Holy Spirit.⁵ This is because the Apostle appeals to it as prophecy.⁶ And this preface is one reason for dividing the quo-

¹ 1 Thess. v. 22.

² ix. 15, 28.

³ So Raphel, Jac. Capell., Wolf, Baumgarten, Lindsay; against de Wette, Lün., Del., von Hof., Alford.

⁴ See Grimm's Lex.; comp. John iii. 26, 28; v. 33; Acts x. 43; xv. 8; xxii. 5.

⁵ Comp. iii. 7.

⁶ von Hof.

tation so as to make the second part consist of ver. 17.¹ For if, with most expositors,² we take the second part to begin with λέγει κύριος, and suppose the Author to adopt that phrase as his own, instead of its being continued citation, then what is the chief point of the appeal, viz., ver. 17, is brought forward as the word of God, and not as the testimony of the Holy Spirit.³ Another reason for making the division at ver. 17, is, that between the words of vers. 16 and 17 there is a considerable portion of the quotation left out, as it stands in viii. 10-12. This itself makes the division that represents the language quoted as saying first one (ver. 16), and afterwards the other, (ver. 17). It remains, however, perplexing, that the Author, whose style is so finished, should omit the correlative expression to his μετὰ τὸ εἰρηκεῖναι, that we look for, and that is usually supplied by a: "then saith he,"⁴ or the like. And expositors have usually omitted to say why he quotes the first part at all; and have interpreted what is written here as they might interpret if vers. 16, 17 were not in the text.

The whole of the quotation is useful for the Apostle's purpose. The first part (ver. 16), declares the divine purpose of establishing a new covenant after those days, and the inward and spiritual nature of its laws; the second declares the remission of sins. The two are produced with omissions before the second so as to make it manifest that the second is said with relation to the conditions referred to in the first. This prepares for the following statement: and saying that the Holy Spirit bears witness with him, the Apostle with one brief, final word declares the fundamental and revolutionary truth to which all his argument has tended.

Now where remission of these is, is no more offering for sin.

This statement is often read as if the Apostle said: *wherever* God remembers sins no more, there is no more offering for sin. We have, however, a more definite and qualified expression, though equally comprehensive in its effect. For the οπου = **where**, is not wherever and universally. It is somewhere. The οπου refers to the relation or sphere wherein this statement is true, and "sets it forth in a *local* conception, like the Latin '*ubi*, i. e., *qua*

¹ So von Hof., Alford, etc. ² e. g., Del., Lün. ³ von Hof. ⁴ Version 1881.

in re’ or ‘*in quo rerum statu.*’ The relation is an *objective real* one, ‘*historically*’ come to pass.”¹ It is when God establishes the New Covenant, as expressed in ver. 16. With that as his $\pi\omicron\tilde{\nu}\ \sigma\tau\tilde{\omega}$, and with the power furnished by the concurring testimony of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle moves the whole mighty and long-enduring fabric of the law, with its sacrifices and priesthood, and the burden of them is gone for believing Jew and Gentile alike.

The Apostle has achieved his purpose proposed at vi. 1, and has submitted his readers to a discipline fitted to lead them on to full growth. Having passed over it, we observe that the instruction has been founded on the Old Testament scriptures, and that, while later portions of the Scriptures have been appealed to, the *text* has been the Pentateuch. Thus, as a matter of fact, he has dealt with “*the beginning of the oracles of God.*” Moreover, we have observed that his method has been to begin by reciting the elementary matters from which he reasons. Thus he presented Melchizedek (vii. 1-3), and the Tabernacle (ix. 1-7), and the use of blood (ix. 18-22), and besides these, other particulars, as his argument went on.² Observing this, we must believe, as was represented above at v. 12, that where the Apostle says: “ye have need that some one teach you the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God,” he means by the oracles of God the Old Testament, and by the beginning of those oracles, the Pentateuch, and by the elements such things as he actually uses. We notice that they are facts and institutions, rather than statements of doctrines or truths; and further, that “elements” is a fitting designation. Observing, also, the method the Apostle has actually used, we infer, that when he says the words of v. 12, he has the intention of doing himself what he says is necessary for his readers.

The introduction to this extended course of teaching is the exhortation of iv. 14-16. And we find that the passage, now to follow, has much in common with that, especially with the words: “Having then a great high priest who hath passed through the

¹ Meyer on Col. iii. 11; comp. Grimm, *Lex. ὁπιον*; Matt. vi. 19, 20.

² See above on v. 12.

heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help." (iv. 14, 16). Doing what is here exhorted, and doing it with boldness and the full measure of faith, and thorough intelligence as to the Christian's privilege, is the condition of full-growth, or adult maturity in Christian life, to which the Apostle would bring his readers. Having now finished the instruction fitted to bring that about, he resumes the exhortation, and also the warnings appropriate to such. The *οὕτως* = **therefore** with which he does this, refers to all the instruction that has followed the exhortation iv. 14-16. We shall see below at ver. 24, that there is even reason for taking the reference of *οὕτως* = **then**, back to iii. 1.

Ver. 19. **Having, therefore, brethren, boldness as regards the entrance of the holies in the blood of Jesus, 20. which he dedicated for us a way new and living through the veil, that is his flesh, 21. and a great priest over the house of God, 22 a. let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith.**

Concerning the recurrence of the title **brethren**, and what may be inferred from it, see below on ver. 24.

We have here a comprehensive preface to the exhortation: **let us draw near**, which expresses the qualification for doing as exhorted. The preface summarizes, from the foregoing extended exposition, the essential things for **drawing near**; by which is meant the same as is more fully expressed iv. 16, as "drawing near the throne of grace." It is a technical religious word,¹ and expresses the whole notion involved, without the amplification needful for its full and exact expression to one unfamiliar with it. These essential things are *two*, and they are represented as the possession (*ἔχοντες*) of him that draws near; (*a*) **boldness for, or in regard to the entrance of the holies**, (*b*) **a great priest over the house of God**. In respect to (*a*), the Apostle now says: **having boldness**; whereas at iv. 16 his exhortation is: "let us draw near with boldness." The difference is owing to his having, by his extended instructions, shown the ground for such boldness. And this shows in what sense he says: "*having boldness*." It is not

¹ Comp. Del.; also ver. 1.

in the sense that they actually possess it, so that now they *are* bold; but that it is there for them to have: and being now presented so completely that nothing remains but for them to appropriate it, it is assumed they have it. And so the Apostle assumes, speaking in the first person, and comprehending his readers as now, like himself, at the point of full-growth. At vi. 1 he said: "let us go on to full growth."

By **boldness** is meant the same as at iv. 16, a confidence inspired by the reality and certainty of something outward and objective; it is not something inward and subjective, like bravery. Here, however, it is inspired by the certainty respecting the **entrance of the holies**, which the foregoing argument has demonstrated, and thus is designated: **boldness in respect to the entrance**. By εἰσοδον is not meant "entering," or the act of entering, but **entrance**, i. e., way of admission, and εἰς τὴν εἰσοδον may not be translated "for entering" or "to enter,"¹ but **for or as respects the entrance**.² This appears from the εἰσόδον = **way** that comes in apposition after ἧν = **which**. It follows from this that ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ cannot be joined to εἰσοδον, as ἐν αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ to εἰσέρχεται ix. 25. The notion of entering with or by the blood of Jesus is not expressed here. **In the blood of Jesus**,³ designates the ground for the boldness; because there is that blood, and it has the efficacy described, as *e. g.*, at ix. 12, we have boldness in respect to the entrance of the Holies, that it is an open way for us. There is admission to **the Holies**, by which is meant heaven, where, vi. 20, it is said, Christ has entered a forerunner for us.

The Apostle defines the **entrance**. For **which** refers to **entrance**. It is that which Jesus **dedicated** ⁴ **for us**; by which is meant that it was made for our benefit and devoted to our use by Jesus. He called it a new way (πρόσφατον, an adjective that occurs no where else in the New Testament),⁵ meaning a way newly or freshly made. He also calls it a **living way**. What is

¹ Versions 1611, 1881.

² von Hof, Angus.

³ Comp. at ver. 10, why this name may be used here.

⁴ Comp. at ix. 18.

⁵ But comp. Acts xviii. 2. And see below under ver. 27.

meant by this seems needlessly obscured by the effort to make it express too much. So simple a phrase does not admit of being interpreted as though it expressed an antithesis to "the dead ceremony of entrance into the earthly holy place."¹ The fact that there never before was a way (ix. 8) to go, excludes this antithesis. Nor is it to be burdened with both that meaning and more added on, like the interpretation: "The Apostle calls it a living way, because, not merely is it there to be walked, but itself bears him who walks it whither he would go, seeing it is nothing else than that relation of humanity to God which was made by the departure of Jesus to God, and which continues in His communion with God."² The Author's meaning in the adjectives **new and living** is to be derived from what he represents concerning the manner in which the way was dedicated. Jesus made the way **through the vail, that is his flesh**. In this representation it is obvious that the Apostle has not only in mind the arrangements of the Tabernacle as he has described them ix. 1-7, but also the interpretation he there gave in ver. 8, that while the anterior tent stood for use, the way of the Holies, *i. e.*, heaven, was not manifest. The Apostle now represents expressly that that way was made manifest by Jesus. In doing so, he does not represent the way as one that *was* there, but one that was *made* for us by Jesus. Accordingly, he does not represent that the vail was drawn aside or removed, as something that hid what was there. He says Jesus made the way **through** (*διὰ*, locally) **the vail**, an expression not elsewhere used. This denotes a way that was never there before, and that nothing was to hide or close up. It is reasonable to suppose, as is commonly done, that in this mention of the vail and flesh of Jesus in so mysterious a connection, there is reflected the equally mysterious occurrence of the rending of the vail of the temple when Jesus died on the cross.³ But the reference is not express, nor is there anything in the present expression or in that occurrence that makes it obvious how, to the words **through the vail**, the Apostle adds **that is his flesh**. This double expression intimates that saying: Jesus made a way through the vail, and: Jesus made a way through

¹ Alford; comp. Del. and most.² von Hof.³ Matt. xxvii, 51.

His flesh, are parallel terms. Either expression, taken by itself, would be easy of interpretation. But taken in combination, their interpretation is difficult. The common interpretation understands the Apostle to affirm, that the flesh, *i. e.*, the human nature of Jesus, was a vail, "that hung like a curtain between Him and the divine sanctuary into which He would enter; and in order to such entrance, this curtain had to be withdrawn by death, even as the high priest had to draw aside the temple-vail in order to make his entry into the holy of holies."¹ This interpretation demands the further definition, that "the flesh of Jesus is not for us what it was for Him, a curtain that, as long as He lived in it, separated Him from the place of God who is above the world. Thus only of Him can it be said that He went to God through the vail."²

All this, however, is a conception of Christ's human nature that has no parallel either in the present epistle, or elsewhere in the New Testament, and is too much to evolve out of the present expression alone. It is, in fact, deduced from what is itself an inference, *viz.*, that the Apostle calls Christ's flesh a vail, meaning such a vail as that in the tabernacle. But we may well reconsider this natural inference, when we see that it is pregnant with such consequences as those evolved above. A closer scrutiny shows that the inference referred to is not necessary. It is not **the vail** and **his flesh** that are parallel terms in the representation before us. It is: **dedicated through the vail**, and: **dedicated through his flesh** that are parallel. As the rending of the temple-vail simultaneously with the death of Jesus on the cross is the only thing that is known that may throw light on the present expression, it is nearer the truth to interpret with Ebrard: "To the emblematical fact of the rending of the emblematical curtain, corresponded the fact of the violent slaying of Christ." But there is no need of supposing either emblem or allegory to be intended. When Arnold of Winkelried opened the ranks of the opposing Austrians by grasping an armful of their pointed lances and burying them in his body, the historian or poet might say, that "he made way for liberty through the severed ranks,—that is

¹ Del., similarly von Hof, Lün., Alford.

² von Hof.

through his body." And the reader would not suppose a parallel to be made between "body" and "ranks." He would understand that two things occurring simultaneously, and equally concerned in the thing achieved, may have equal mention in what is described.¹ And so we may interpret the expression before us. And in doing so, it is not even necessary to suppose that the Apostle refers to the rending of the temple vail. It is enough that his foregoing instructions have presented both Christ's entering within the vail a forerunner for us (vi. 19, 20), and His entering into the Holies by His own blood (ix. 12) as simultaneous acts, whereby the way is made for us to approach unto God. Giving both equal mention in defining "the entrance of the holies," the Apostle says: **Jesus dedicated it through the vail, that is his flesh; a way new and living.**

With this simple understanding of the words describing the dedication of the way, we may more easily apprehend what is meant by calling it: **new and living.** By the first is meant, as already said, newly, or freshly made. Yet it seems likely² that the Apostle is led to use the unusual word *νεωφωτισ* to express this, with some reference to its primary meaning = "newly slain," because of the manner in which the way was made: as one surveying a ruined city would likely describe the fortunes of its citizens as "dilapidated." In calling the way **living**, the Apostle is similarly influenced by the idea of the manner in which the way was dedicated through flesh. Instead, then, of interpreting the meaning as given above, we may take as much of Ebrard's as says, that the way is called living because "it consists in a living act," and not include with him any idea of contrast with the local and earthly way of the legal priests, or contrast with any other way. To interpret **living way** to mean "a life-giving way"³ is to make a single word express what it is the aim of our whole passage to signify; an objection that may be made to other compendious meanings like those cited above. Finally, as

¹ Comp. *corinth.* Phil. 12.

² As suggested by Gerhard in Del., with dissent by Del.; but approved by Angus.

³ As de Wette, Olshausen, Stuart, etc.

regards **the entrance** now described, there is nothing in the words before us that expresses the notion, commonly assumed,¹ that the way is one first trodden by Christ Himself and so inaugurated for us. Nothing is said here of the way Jesus must go to enter the Holies; but only the way opened thither for us is spoken of,² and that Jesus opened it.

In regard to (*b*) the second qualification for approaching as exhorted, it is to be noted that *ἱερεὺς μέγας* means **great priest**, and that it is of Jesus as *Priest*, and not as High Priest that the Apostle speaks here. Nor is **great priest** to be taken as an equivalent expression for high priest.³ And such is his appropriate designation when called, **a priest over the house of God**. "For in that relation He is not considered in reference to what makes Him the antitype of the legal high priest in the service that peculiarly belongs to the latter, but as priest pure and simple."⁴ Not that **priest** involves the notion of one set over the house of God. But of this priest, because He is **a great priest**, this is said of Him, in a peculiar manner, as it would not be of another.⁵ It is as Priest the Apostle has presented Jesus in the conclusion of his argument (vers. 11-14) and as a Great Priest, seated at God's right hand; and so he refers to Him here. The approach to which we are exhorted corresponds to that which *individuals* made through the mediation of the priests. Thus it is as the Priest to whom every one may come for priestly mediation that Jesus is here so named; and not as High Priest. By the house of God is not meant heaven⁶ and its redeemed inhabitants, nor yet that, inclusive of the church on earth.⁷ At iii. 6, the Apostle has expressly and pointedly said that "we are the house of God," meaning believers on earth who hold fast their boldness and hope firm to the end. This, and the recurrence of some of the language there in our present context (ver. 23) are sufficient reason for believing that he means the same here. Beside, as expressing a qualification for approaching God in

¹ *e. g.*, by de Wette, Lün., Del., Alford, von Hof., Angus.

² So Riehm. p. 591.

³ Comp. iv. 14; against Stuart.

⁴ von Hof.

⁵ So von Hof.; comp. "a son" iii. 6.

⁶ Against de Wette, Riehm, Lün., etc.

⁷ Against Del.

worship, it is everything that we should see in Jesus a Priest over the house of God, *i. e.*, ourselves; whereas, it does not seem plain what force there might be in saying that He is Priest over those in heaven. It is those on earth that need the priest by whom to draw near.

Doubly qualified as now expressed, *viz.*, having boldness in regard to the entrance, and having such a Priest, the exhortation is: let us draw near to God as He is in the Holies or heaven, **with a true heart**,¹ *i. e.*, with an inward disposition in harmony with the action proposed, and without any inward contradiction, **in fullness of faith**,² *i. e.*, being fully assured of finding entrance and acceptance with God through our Priest. It is not drawing near, but drawing near *in the fashion described*, *viz.*, with a true heart and full faith, that is the point of the exhortation.

To the exhortation to "draw near," etc., the Apostle adds: "let us hold fast the confession." We are indebted to von Hofmann for the interpretation that takes *ῥεραντισμένοι* . . . *καθαρῶ* as prefatory to *κατέχωμεν*, in the same way that: "Having boldness . . . house of God," is prefatory to: "let us draw near," *i. e.*, giving the reason for so doing. It is expedient, then, to reproduce his own justification of the construction, though somewhat abbreviated.

"It is usual to take: **having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**,³ and even: **and having had our body washed with pure water**,⁴ as additional ground for the exhortation: 'let us draw near.' Additional ground is not something one should expect. If to an exhortation based on reasons given in a foregoing participial clause, there is joined another participial clause, one would suppose that, in distinction from that which has preceded (and here in the same line with the expressions: 'with a true heart,' and: 'in fullness of faith'), it would name the manner and means of doing the thing exhorted. But neither the clause: 'having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,' nor: 'and our body washed,' etc., is fitted to do this,

¹ Comp. LXX. Isa. xxxviii. 3.

² Comp. vi. 11.

³ So *e. g.*, Bengel, Boehme, Tholuck, Ebrard, Kurtz, Ewald.

⁴ So *e. g.*, Bleek, de Wette. Del., Riehm, p. 741.

while they are quite as fit to be the ground for the following exhortation, as the participial clause ver. 19 sq. is fitted to be the ground for the exhortation: 'let us draw near.' We may, therefore, attempt a division of the sentences in accordance with these considerations, undisturbed by the reproach that we clumsily demolish the harmonious structure of the whole, finely disposed period vers. 19-23.¹ And this the more so, because the supposed harmonious period closes, not with ver. 23, but with ver. 25, and by this, its much extolled structure loses quite as much as now the division commends itself that makes of the whole passage, vers. 19-25, two similar periods. Such a division no more mars the fineness of the periods, than when: **let us hold fast**, etc., is made the beginning of a second half, that is unconnected with the first;² or when the apodosis begun with: 'let us draw near' is made to consist of three unequal parts,³ of which, the middle one: 'let us hold fast,' etc., with its supplement: 'faithful is he that promised,' is much inferior in extent than the first and third. The division proposed, assuredly, does less injustice to the Apostle, than when it is assumed, that he would have closed the period with: 'our body washed with pure water;' and was only prompted to exhort still further, to hold fast the confession, because baptism reminded him of the confession; by which this participial clause, unobserved, would be detached from the exhortation to which it belonged, and attached to that not originally intended.⁴ This assumption is even an admission that the two participial clauses: 'our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,' and: 'our body washed with pure water,' must belong to one another. And this they assuredly do, . . . and they are the complement of one another. The perfect participles declare what has happened to us once for all.⁵ On the ground that such has happened to us, the Apostle bases an exhortation to do what is the consequence of our [thereby] belonging to the church of Christ, after He has given an exhortation, based upon what we have toward God through Jesus and what we have in Him, to observe the conduct that we

¹ So Lün.² As *e. g.*, Del.³ As *e. g.*, Bleek.⁴ So Kurtz.⁵ Against Del.

ought in our relation toward God. . . The double possession in the one case, qualifies us to pray to God, as the Apostle has required, and in the other this two-fold benefit binds us in duty to do what He will now require. And the two halves of the section stand along side of one another without conjunctive particle, because the exhortations are coordinate, and what he says to show the qualifications for the one and the obligation to the other, serve as the ground for such coordinate exhortations."

Adopting, then, this construction, we understand the Apostle to continue without a conjunction, as giving an exhortation coordinate with that already given :

Ver. 22 *b*. **Having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, 23. and having had our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope immovable, for he is faithful that promised.**

We notice that ver. 19 begins with a participial clause prefatory to a hortatory verb in the first person. We have here a similar participial clause, similarly related in its position to a hortatory verb. This itself offers the presumption that it is prefatory like the other. It would seem, then, that all that is needed to confirm us in so construing it, is to find that it expresses what is suitable ground for the thing exhorted by the verb. What is affirmed in our participial clauses will show this relation.

First of all, the perfect participles, **having been sprinkled**, and **having been washed**, express actions completed in the past, and done once for all. This meaning is blurred by the rendering : "having our hearts sprinkled, . . and our body washed,"¹ which admits of being understood to mean things we procure to be done, and so procure in view of doing what we are exhorted to do (whether that be "drawing near" or "holding fast"). We suppose it is this confused notion that has occasioned these expressions to be taken in connection with the foregoing : "let us draw near," and that makes it difficult to do justice to von Hofmann's construction that connects them with : **let us hold fast**, etc. This blurred sense suggests a likeness to the action of legal wor-

¹ Vers. 1611, 1881.

shippers, who, as often as they would draw near to God, would procure qualification by sprinkling and washing. And so the Apostle is understood to mean, that we are to procure qualification for drawing near to God in the corresponding Christian way, and only true way ;¹ and the only contrast intended is supposed to be in the means employed. But close attention to the perfects yields a different meaning. The contrast is not in the means employed, which are not expressed, but in the completeness of the things done, which is expressed by the perfects. The contrast, indeed, is not now expressed, but has been in the foregoing argument, and is here only to be remembered, while the expressions before us, only represent the conclusion, *i. e.*, the ascertained truth, which is now assumed. The action expressed by the perfects, then, as the completed transaction of the past, is something that, when done, had the effect now described. That was Christ's finished work as Priest. When He did that, He did all that it is the priest's part to do. Thus, we have read the Apostle saying : " by one sacrifice He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." ² But : "perfected" comprehends all the benefit to be had from priestly mediation. It comprehends, indeed, *all* that pertains to right relation with God, not only what the priest did, but what the worshipper himself did when drawing near to God. It comprehended both the sprinklings with blood, and the washings with water. Therefore, to say : " by one sacrifice He hath perfected," comprehends the notions, by one sacrifice He hath sprinkled, and hath washed them that are sanctified. In our perfects, then, the Apostle expresses an effect of Christ's priestly work, such as would be expressed did he say, with evident reference to ver. 14 : having been perfected.

The Apostle, however, says first : **having been sprinkled as to our hearts from an evil conscience.** Sprinkling is in order to cleansing, and the expression before us means : having had our hearts cleansed in the way that sacrificial blood does this. The resemblance of this expression to ix. 11,³ requires us to understand the same thing to be meant here that is meant there, except that **an evil conscience**, is more comprehensive of all that burdens

¹ Comp., *e. g.*, Stuart.² Comp. on ver. 14 above.³ Comp. *ad loc.*

the heart with guilt, than is the expression : "conscience of dead works." Here, as there, the reference is to the consciousness of evil that must be removed by sacrifice and priestly mediation. The legal spirit, that the Apostle has refuted and rebuked, moved his readers to seek cleansing by legal sacrifices continually renewed. He now reminds them that they have been cleansed once for all. He adds : **and having been washed with pure water.** Whatever interpretation is put on the foregoing expression involves also the present one. If that, as we suppose, reflects the disposition of the readers to resort to legal cleansing by blood-sprinkling, reminding them that they have been cleansed once for all, then the present expression reflects the disposition to resort to legal washings,¹ reminding them that they have been washed once for all ; for the sacrifice of Christ that perfected forever, accomplished that also. And so the Apostle says : **pure water**, not as meaning actual water. For then **pure** must mean actually clean water. But he means what does really make pure,² as Christ said : "I am the true bread."³ And such, we suppose, is the reference here. The propriety of mentioning here the washing of the body with water, has, indeed, no other natural explanation, than the reference to the context at ix. 9-14, where, in ver. 10, "divers washings," (*βαπτισμοίς*) are mentioned among the ordinances of the flesh imposed till the time of rectification, when Christ procured an everlasting deliverance from them.⁴ With such a reference, the present mention is natural, and reproduces a previously established truth, as does the foregoing expression. Without such a reference, the mention of **washing the body** introduces something corresponding to nothing that has been discoursed on, and consequently expositors, seeing no such reference, have little agreement about what is meant. Some understand the Apostle to refer directly to Christian Baptism,⁵ supposing that the mention of **the body** requires that, and renders inadmissible the view of others,⁶ that this, as well as the

¹ Comp. Lev. xiv. 8, 9 ; xv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, etc. Comp. Angus.

² Comp. Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

³ Comp. John vi. 32.

⁴ Comp. above on ix. 12.

⁵ Bleek, Del., Alford, Lün., von Hof.

⁶ *e. g.*, Calvin.

foregoing expression, has only a spiritual meaning, the present one to be taken as parallel with the language of Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Not to adduce other views, we agree with those that think, that the mention of **the body** requires us to understand a purifying that concerns the body. But we see no reason for understanding the reference to be to Baptism; especially when it is evident that the language of vers. 19–23 *a* is meant to reproduce in brief, with a view to exhortation, elements in the foregoing argument; and among those we find a satisfactory reference as just explained. What is done in baptism concerns *inward* cleansing as much as the purifying of the body. Our conjoined expressions: **having been sprinkled**, etc., and **having been washed** evidently express what is *signified* by Baptism. But for that reason we may *not* take the second to refer to Baptism and the first not. One does not need to be thinking of Baptism when he designates the things that Baptism signifies. Moreover, “it is inconsistent with sound interpretation to make one rite the anti-type of another.”¹ A purified body is one of the benefits of Christ’s priestly mediation,² and is included in that effect that has been described ver. 10: “we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” By that, it is possible to do as the Apostle exhorts xiii. 15: “Let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of the lips which make confession to His name.”³

The notions expressed by: **having been sprinkled**, etc., and **having been washed**, are obviously a fitting preface to the exhortation: **let us hold fast the confession of the hope immovable**. The Apostle has said, “we are the house of God if we hold steadfast to the end the boldness and boast of the hope.”⁴ Not that we are thus made the house of God; that is done by the mediation of “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;”⁵ but persevering boldness is the evidence that we are that house of God. Now in the expressions: **having been sprinkled**, etc., and **having been washed**, etc., the Apostle expresses that effect of Christ’s priestly mediation that qualifies us to belong to the house of God,

¹ Angus.² Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23.³ Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 11.⁴ iii. 5.⁵ iii. 1.

the same, therefore, is the fitting ground for exhorting us to do that which is the proof of our belonging to that house of God, over which, says our context, Jesus is a Great Priest. What is expressed here in exhortation is the same as is expressed iii. 5 conditionally. **The hope** is not the subjective sentiment ; and we may add that a sentiment or emotion is not a thing that can be confessed without change,¹ but something that fluctuates under influences irrespective of the conviction that the thing to hope for remains. **The hope** is that objective thing laid up in heaven as the goal of the believers race.² **The confession**³ of the hope is the confession whose substance or contents is that thing Christians have in prospect and that is express matter of promise. As something confessed, it *could* be held immovable in the sense that they would hold the belief that what they hoped for was certainly and unchangeably in prospect for them. The ground for this constancy is the character of Him that promised, whose promise gives substance to the hope ; and so the Apostle adds : **For faithful is he that promised.**

As we have noted that the thought expressed here in exhortation is substantially the same as that expressed conditionally at iii. 6. so we must note that in both instances the subsequent context presents substantially the same sentiments. At iii. 7-19 they are couched in the form of warning. Here they are expressed in the form of exhortation.

Ver. 24. **And let us consider one another for provocation of love and of good works ;** 25. **not forsaking our own meeting, as is the custom of some, but exhorting and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.**

The present hortatory verb : **let us consider** has no preface like the two that precede, because it is not, like them, something that must be grounded on the truths established in the extended argument preceding ver. 19. It is the proper sequence of that condition when one draws near to God in the fullness of faith and maintains unwavering the confession of the hope. The Apostle says : **let us consider one another.** At iii. 1 he has said : " holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling consider (ye) the

¹ von Hof.² xii. 1.³ comp. iii. 1 ; iv. 14.

Apostle and High priest of our confession." We have postponed to this point noticing the fact that, at ver. 19, the Apostle begins, the hortatory sequel of his foregoing argument addressing his readers as: **brethren**. This is because we are now better prepared to observe some significant coincidences of the discourse at iii. 1 sqq. and here. Since iii. 1, 12 the Author has not addressed his readers by this title. But now he resumes it, though without the adjective "holy." This is, however, only to give the latter more ample expression in the clauses: "having been sprinkled," etc., "and having been washed," etc. Moreover the language: "having boldness for the entrance of the holies," is a more definite expression for the notion: "heavenly calling." And, "Jesus as having dedicated the new and living way, and now our Great Priest over the house of God," appears as He must appear when, with such instruction as the Apostle gives, we have "considered Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." These coincidences of thought, taken with those noted above, concerning "holding fast the hope," and the words of warning iii. 7 sqq., are plain indications of the Author's own division of his discourse. At iii. 1, after the representation of ii. 17, he formally presents the subject which he has now pursued to its completion in ver. 18, though with various interruptions. Now, in our passage, vers. 19-25, he resumes the direct hortatory address to his readers, having achieved what was proposed in the words: "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus. He resumes with the address **brethren**, to advance to what is next needful. Now he does not, as at iii. 1, propose the confession, of which Jesus as High Priest is the contents, but **the confession** of which **the hope** is the contents. And now it is not Jesus whom we are exhorted to consider, but one another. And consequently, as we shall observe, the hope, and faith that is the certifying or certainty of the hope, and the concern we must have for one another, become the subject of discourse for the rest of the epistle.

Our verses give exhortation, first in a positive, and then in a negative form, and reflect the religious situation that calls for exhortation; ver. 24 reflecting what was *not* doing among the

readers, and ver. 25 reflecting what *was* going on. The double admonition of vers. 19–23, resuming, as it does, the extended foregoing argument, reflects the cause of what was going on, viz., a defective confession of Jesus, in which His high-priestly quality was obscured, if not ignored. The confession of Jesus being now corrected, let the proper sequel appear in the matter of fellowship. Let us consider one another well (*κατανοῶμεν*)¹ for **provocation of love and of good works**. This does not mean what would be most naturally understood by the rendering: “to provoke unto love,² viz., stimulating one another to love, etc. The word rendered **provocation** (*παροξυσμός*) is the same that occurs Acts xv. 39,³ where it is rendered “contention,” and where we are told how Paul and Barnabas parted company on account of their reciprocal provocation. The **provocation** is that which one feels himself when considering well another,⁴ not what he occasions in another.⁵ The word is commonly used in a bad sense, but receives a good meaning here by a turn of expression like that which says: “owe no man anything but to love one another.”⁶ The readers had not been experiencing provocation in this salutary way, but rather provocation to enmity and division; in what fashion, is reflected in the negative clause that follows. **The assembly** (*τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν*) means, not the act of assembling, but the meeting itself, as we say: **our meeting**. But the Apostle says here: **our own meeting** (*ἐαυτῶν*), which may have an emphasis, like that of our English idiom, implying another meeting for which our own may be forsaken.⁷ The meeting so referred to is not some locally definite one, but the Christian congregation for worship and edification, that is the universal representation of the Church of Christ wherever believers exist. That there was reason for the present admonition is expressed in the words: **as the custom of some is**. In antithesis to the “forsaking,” the Apostle adds: **but exhorting**. He leaves the object unexpressed. In any similar participial sentence like ours: **not forsaking . . . but exhorting**, the expressed object after the first participle would

¹ Comp. at iii. 1.² Versions of 1611, 1881.³ Comp. Deut. xxix. 28, in LXX.⁴ So von Hof.⁵ Against Del., Angus.⁶ Rom. xiii. 8.⁷ With Lün., against von Hof.

be understood to be the object of the second. And we may so take it here,¹ and not supply : "one another,"² if we correctly apprehend the kind of exhortation and the aim of it, that the Apostle has in mind. He does not mean exhortation to faithful attendance on meetings for worship,³ nor to love and good works.⁴ These would be exhortations to be directed to individuals; and with this notion of the kind of exhortation intended, it is natural to supply : "one another." The character of the exhortation is indicated by the words that follow : **and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.** It is the thing here referred to that must be the motive and the topic of exhortation. Whatever it may be, the advent of Christ, the end of the world, or the crisis of the Jewish nation and destruction of Jerusalem, and with that, the destruction of the Temple and abrogation of its worship, the exhortation prompted by that must be *exhortation to the meeting of Christian believers as a unit.* The Apostle says : **ye see**, whereas from ver. 19 the discourse has run in the first person plural. The motive for this change may escape detection. But it may be to enhance the significance of what is remarked, as the Author can appeal to the judgment of his readers for the truth of it.⁵

As to **the day**⁶ the Apostle means, it seems to us evident, that it is the crisis of national rejection that was impending for the Jews that rejected Christ,⁷ and not the second coming of Christ to judgment.⁸ At the period of this writing the signs of the approach of what Christ predicted must have been plain to believers, and more especially to Jewish believers. And the nearer they were to the scene of action, viz., Jerusalem, the more those signs would impress them. It may even be this fact that influenced the Author to write : **ye see**, instead of : we see. At iii. 12, 13, the Apostle has said : "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of perfidy when there is a falling away from the living God; but exhort

¹ With von Hof. ² Lün., Alford, Vers. 611, 1881. ³ As Lün., Lindsay.

⁴ As Davidson.

⁵ So Lün.

⁶ Comp. Luke xxi. 22; Dan. ix. 26, 27; Joel ii. 1, 11, 31; Mal. ii. 12.

⁷ So Lindsay, Ebrard, Baumgarten. ⁸ As Del., von Hof, Lün., Alford, Calvin.

one another day by day, so long as it is called [*out*] To-day, in order that no one of you may be hardened by the deceit of sin." "The day" meant in our verse is the period when "the falling away" shall take place as a definite historical event. It is, for those concerned, the end of what is designated as "To-day," and of hearing "To-day" called out to them. The nature of the exhortation that is prompted by the signs of **the day approaching**, must be the same as that inspired by the thought that the call: "To-day" still sounds; and its aim must be to prevent the hardening of hearts, and to move all to "escape"¹ from the calamity that must be, and will soon be the consequence of such hardening. An example of such exhortation is Peter in Acts ii. 40: "He exhorted them, saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation."² Such is the consistency of the Author with his own discourse, that appears, when we understand: **the day** to refer to the approaching calamity of the Jewish nation. Beside these sufficient grounds for so interpreting his meaning, we have the considerations that are represented in the extended note at ii. 3, above. The words that now follow corroborate this interpretation, as we observe that they fit with exactness the representations just made as we understand them. The approaching day must concern the readers and fill them with alarm, if they are in danger of being involved in its calamities. There is that danger.

Ver. 26. **For if we willingly sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27. but some fearful reception of judgment and fervour of fire a-coming to devour the adversaries.**

It is commonly thought that the present passage has its closest parallel with vi. 4 sqq.,³ but its real parallel is with ii. 1-3. It is in fact, the same thought as there, but now expressed as the subsequent progress of the Apostle's discourse demands. The unlikeness to vi. 4 sqq. appears in the fact that the Apostle uses the first person plural, instead of, as there, the third person plural, where he describes persons and sins with which he does not identify himself, even hypothetically. The likeness to ii. 1-3 appears in the use here, as there, of the first person plural,

¹ Comp. above on ii. 3. ² Comp. Deut. xxxii. 5. ³ Del., Lün., Alford.

and in the appeal (vers. 28, 29), to the law of Moses and the recompense visited on him that nullifies it, as showing what is left for one who turned from the salvation offered through Christ. In ii. 3 the inquiry is: How shall *we* escape the inevitable recompense of the law given by angels if we neglect so great salvation from it? Now, however, the Apostle has fully displayed the completeness of Christ as a Saviour. By **the truth** he means all this sum of saving knowledge that he has represented. He means this particularly, while he uses the Christian word that comprehends all revealed Christian doctrine of salvation.¹ He says **knowledge** of the truth; and by *ἐπίγνωσις* as distinguished from the less forcible *γνῶσις*, is meant the knowledge of a definite and actual thing.² As such he has communicated the truth, and now his readers **have received** it. This makes the difference between the present point and ii. 1–3, in recurring to the same thought. Here, as there, he comprehends himself with his readers: we have received the knowledge of the truth. But here, instead of: “having neglected,” he says: **If we sin willingly**. By this is not meant any sort of transgression, but sin in the universal way,³ with reference to **the truth** which is mentioned universally. It is sin that rejects the whole truth, and not merely a part of it, and treats it as if it were not the truth.

It is affirmed,⁴ that: **having received the knowledge of the truth** describes a really converted person, and that “this cardinal point must be kept in mind, or else ver. 29 becomes unintelligible.”⁵ Leaving it till we come to ver. 29, to show that this is a misrepresentation as regards that, let us examine how true it is with respect to the language before us. The above affirmation cannot be justified on the sole ground, that *ἐπίγνωσις* comprehends such a meaning and admits of no other. We observe, indeed, as a matter of fact, that the use of the word in the New Testament, except perhaps 2 Peter ii. 21, consists with that interpretation. But what is decisive in the present case, is that the Apostle uses the first person plural. He means such as have received the truth as he has himself. As regards the question: may one that

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12; 2 Tim. ii. 25; 2 John 3.

² Del., Alford.

³ Calvin.

⁴ Del., Alford, etc.

⁵ Alford.

has been converted reject Christ and be lost, concerning which it is common to appeal to our passage (vers. 26–29), our present vers. 26, 27, offer nothing more than does ii. 3, where the Apostle says : “ How shall *we* escape having neglected so great salvation.” The present representation, like ii. 3, is hypothetical, and is not meant to express directly or indirectly that the sin ever is committed by the character described. It is introduced to enhance the force of what *is* affirmed in the connection. Here it is the declaration : **there remains no more sacrifice for sins.** In ii. 3, it is to imply that there is no other way of escape than the great salvation. At ii. 3, we have seen that the Apostle does not represent, that there is no escape because the sin of neglecting so great salvation is so great, and unpardonable, but simply that he and his readers will not escape the certain penalty of having transgressed the law, if they neglect the only salvation, and that so great. So here, he does not represent the sinning as calling attention to its heinousness, and then say that there remains no more sacrifice for *such* sin, as if there *did* remain sacrifice for other sins.¹ *Ἐχουσίως ἁμαρτανόντων* = **sinning willingly**, does not *express* heinous sin, albeit the sin referred to would be heinous and even apostasy. The Apostle uses *ἁμαρτάνω* in that sense that was perfectly familiar to Jewish Christians, as the word used in the LXX. to translate *חטא*. This word “ marks sin as mistaken action ; there is plainly, however, a reference to the goal fixed by God—human action is described as missing its destination, and thus failing to fulfil the word of God.”² The Apostle, therefore, does not mean single sins, or sins of just any sort ; nor does he mean apostasy from Christ, as if using a synonym for *παρὰ πρὸς ὄντας* vi. 6.³ He means persistently pursuing (*ἁμαρτανόντων* present participle), a way divergent from and in disregard of the truth. And because the truth is known, it is therefore voluntary conduct.⁴ As in 1 Peter v. 2, elders are exhorted to “ exercise oversight, not by constraint, but willingly ” (*ἐχουσίως*), so the sinning referred

¹ Against Calvin, Del., Alford.

² Cremer, Lex. 1st ed. s. v. *ἁμαρτ.* comp. Exod. xxxi. 30, 31, 33 ; Num. xiv. 40 ; xxi. 7 ; xxii. 34.

³ Against Del.

⁴ So von Hof. ; for conduct of a different sort comp. 1 Tim. i. 13.

to here, is failing to fulfill the known will of God and missing the divine destination, not by any constraint of ignorance, or otherwise, but **willingly**, because one chooses another way. It is obvious how exactly this interpretation fits the general tenor of the Author's discourse. **If we sin willingly**, so understood, is just what the Apostle may say including himself in the supposed case, in order to make the plainer what he would affirm. The expression is conditional, and represents a situation of which he affirms: **there remains no more sacrifice for sins**. What is thus affirmed is a universal proposition, reiterating comprehensively the negative aspect of **the truth** now known from the extended instructions preceding ver. 19. The legal sacrifices have been shown to be no sacrifices that take away sin. The sacrifice of Christ does take away sin forever (ver. 14). The concluding statement of the instruction is: "Now where there is remission of these, there is no more offering for sins" (ver. 18). Christ's sacrifice was "once for all," and there is and will be no other. If one turns from that, he has no other to look for. It is therefore, as we have said, a mistake to understand ¹ the present statement to mean, that the sin referred to is too heinous to be forgiven or to let repentance be possible. It is also a mistake to suppose ² that it expresses, that there is no sacrifice remaining for *that* sin which one commits who turns from availing himself of the sacrifice of Christ. This is true; but true as comprehended in the universal situation described. The Apostle says: **Sins**. *There is no sacrifice left for any sins*. The Apostle expresses in the antitheses (ὁ ἐξ) what *is* left. It is **some dreadful reception of judgment and zeal of fire a-coming to devour the opposers**. Most expositors take the τῶν as belonging to φονεῖν αὐτούς,³ which must then mean that the quality of dreadfulness is in an undetermined measure, implying a very great degree. But as the emphasis is on ἐκδοχῆναι, the force of the τῶν attaches rather to that, to enhance the notion thus expressed by its indefiniteness.⁴

There seems the more reason for this when we render ἐκδοχῆναι = **reception**, and not, as is usually done, "expectation." The latter

¹ As Del., Alford, Davidson.

² As von Hof.

³ *c. g.*, Alford, Lün.

⁴ So von Hof., comp. Winer, Gram., p. 170.

misleads one to understand that a subjective emotion of inward dread is here referred to, and thus to ascribe an emphasis to *φοβερὰ* that is not intended. We are indebted to Alford for the correction of this rendering, which he fully substantiates. The wonder is that it has so universally prevailed. The simple fact seems to be just as he states it: *ἐκδοχή* means "reception," and is nowhere supposed to mean "expectation," except in this place. In the New Testament Lexicons¹ the latter meaning is given for the present text only, without any support, and is simply transferred from the commentaries. We may suppose it has been occasioned by the proximity of *ἐκδεχόμενος* ver. 13, which, as noted there, is usually, though incorrectly, rendered: **expecting**. Seeing then **reception**, and not "expectation," is the correct rendering, it is a mistake to suppose, as is commonly done,² that the Apostle expresses or intimates the torment of an evil conscience that those suffer who have turned from Christ after having known him, and that they are left a prey to dread apprehension. He does not point to what will be expected, *but to what will be left* for such a situation as is supposed, whether expected or not; more likely, we may add, not expected by those concerned, than expected. It is the **reception** itself that is in prospect, of a **dreadful judgment and zeal of fire**, which expression we may leave without comment in the dread-inspiring indefiniteness denoted by the adjunct: **some** (*τίς*), and give our attention to what *is* made definite by the following words. The **judgment** is one that **is a-coming** (*μὲλλοντος*). It is evident that this refers to the same thing to which "the day approaching" (ver. 25) refers. The first impression is, that the Apostle means something soon to happen; and there is no reason for modifying this impression. He refers to the approaching calamity that signalized the rejection of the chosen nation. Every expression in the language before us leads to this interpretation. In harmony with the terms that describe the judgment, we read that it is coming **to devour** those that are its objects. These are designated as: **the opposers or adversaries**.

It is easy to mistake the term: **the opposers** as if it were only

¹ See Grimm, *Lex. sub voce*.

² See, e. g., Calvin.

another designation for those described ver. 26 as "sinning willingly." But the mistake reveals itself if we read: "For if we willingly sin, there remains (only) a fearful judgment a-coming to devour the adversaries." The change from the first person plural to the third person plural is not an inadvertence, nor is it grammatically allowable to suppose that our Author, with his superior Greek, would drop into the exchange of persons so common in Hebrew syntax, while meaning the same thing. The difference of person means different things. **The adversaries** defines **the judgment** that is referred to. It is a well-known judgment, as a predicted thing, that is coming on *the opposers* who are a class well known. Thus Jesus defines the punishment of those on the left hand as: "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."¹ The word, *δενούντος*, that occurs again only Col. ii. 14, expresses something that by its very nature is originally and inveterately contrary, and is a fitting designation for the Jews that rejected their Messiah, but not for those described hypothetically as "willingly sinning." What the Apostle affirms in our verse of those described in ver. 26, is that there is nothing left for them but to receive *along with those to whom it is a-coming*, the dreadful judgment.

In this representation of **the judgment a-coming** the Apostle reflects the language of Deut. xxxii. 22. "For a fire is kindled in mine anger and shall burn unto the lowest hell." We suppose he has in mind that and the whole passage vers. 15-34, from the fact that, in the ver. 30, he quotes the vers. 35, 36 of that passage. In Rom. x. 19; xi. 11 he quotes ver 21 of the same passage when treating the same subject viz., the rejection of the Jews. We fail to observe that expositors have noticed this connection of our passage with Deut. xxxii. This can hardly be owing to an oversight, seeing that every one notices the quotation from it in our verse 30. But, beside the general spirit of Deut. xxxii. 15-36, and the coincidences of thought and actual quotations already mentioned, there are verbal coincidences with our context that support the view we present. Thus we find in LXX. Deut. xxxii. 17 our unusual word *πρόσφατον* ver. 20; and in verses

¹ Matt. xxv. 41.

16, 19, 21 the suggestion of our unusual word *παροξυσμός*; and in verses 19, 21, 22 the suggestion our *πυρὸς ξῆλος* ver. 27; and in ver. 22 *καταφάγεται* for our *εσθίειν* ver. 27; and in verses 20, 35 the suggestion for our *τὴν ἡμέραν* ver. 25.

Ver 28. **Any one having set at nought a law of Moses dies without compassion on [the word of] two or three witnesses. 29. Of how much worse punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trampled under foot the Son of God, and accounted common the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, and treated the Spirit of grace with contempt?**

The Apostle presents this impressive thought without express logical connection with the context by "for" or the like. But we may detect the progress of thought. He has mentioned "the adversaries" and the approaching judgment that will devour them. He has described that judgment with vague indefiniteness suggestive of its terrible measure. The language before us pauses to offer a measure of what is to be anticipated.

It is important to observe, that it is "the opposers" or "adversaries" whose case he presents, and not the character represented hypothetically by: "If we sin willingly." This is, indeed obvious to one who concurs in the interpretation just given under ver. 27. But as corroborative of that, we notice that the Apostle still maintains the third person when mentioning the character in question, while addressing his readers in the second person plural. In contrast with this, we observe at ii. 3 that he says: "how shall we escape having neglected" (*i. e.*, if *we* have neglected) so great salvation, "which was confirmed unto *us*." This leads us to suppose, that if the Author would have put it to his readers, what *they* must expect if they apostatized, he would, after having said: "if we sin willingly," continue with the words: "of how much worse punishment shall we be deemed worthy if we have trampled under foot," etc. This is, however, not his thought. He has represented the situation where one has turned from the sacrifice of Christ, showing that for it there remains nothing but to share the fate of those that are the adversaries of Christ. He now adds a word to deepen the impression of what that must be, in order to put them on their

guard against the deceitfulness of sin, and move them to hold fast to the end.¹ We have here, in fact, a sample of the sort of exhortation that he would have his readers use in their meeting.²

The Apostle appeals to what is prescribed in the law of the Old Covenant, Deut. xvii. 2-7. The present tense does not express that the enactment was soon to be carried out at the period of this writing. It is the same use of the present of which we have found frequent examples in our Author, viz., the present of the Scripture record that he has before him. What he designates as: "the word spoken by angels," ii. 1, he calls here: **Moses' law**,³ an equally true and more common designation. But we suppose it is for the purpose of enhancing the antithesis in ver. 29, when he mentions Christ, whom, for the same reason, he calls by His highest title, **Son of God**. The mention of: **two or three witnesses**, may be without any emphasis as brought in only because part of the case, and so making it plain that the reference is to the particular case in Deut. xvii. 2-7, and not to other cases to which the same penalty attached. In the passage named, there is express requirement that there shall be three, or at least two witnesses. The case so appealed to is one of transgressing God's covenant by idolatry. The Apostle calls it: **setting at nought** ⁴ **the law of Moses**, thus expressing the sin in its spirit and essence, and thereby adjusting the case so as to fit the corresponding guilt under the conditions of the New Covenant.⁵

The Apostle reasons *a minori ad majus*. We observed at ii. 3, that such was not the case. There the earnest question is: "how shall we escape?" which implies that there is no escape from the situation supposed. Here the question is: **of how much worse punishment shall the person described be judged worthy?** viz., than the Old Testament criminal. At ii. 1-3 the situation presented is one of general transgression under the law, with only the prospect due retribution, and the gospel as the only way of escape. Here the worst form of transgressing the law, with the extreme penalty, is taken, to represent what punishment may

¹ iii. 13, 14.² Ver. 25.³ Comp. Luke ii. 22.⁴ Comp. Mark vii. 9.⁵ Comp. von Hof.

be expected for those who not merely "slip by" the opportunity, by "neglect," but who have treated the Saviour and all His benefits with indignity and contempt. The punishment must be worse because the criminality is greater. How much greater, appears from three things that are stated as true in the case presented. The criminality is so expressed by participles in the aorist: **having trampled, having accounted, having treated with contempt.** This is from the point of view of the future "judgment a-coming" when the crimes **shall be judged**, as expressed by the future ἀξιωθῆσεται.¹

Having trampled under foot the Son of God expresses, not a studied abuse and contempt;² but treating as of no more account than the dust one walks on.³ The enormity of the conduct appears from what is so treated, **the Son of God**, and especially when considered comparatively with the case of setting Moses at nought. It does not relieve the case, that one treats the Son of God as nothing, because he believes He is nothing. The swine trample pearls under their feet because they see no better use for them. They are swine for their doing, and will be dealt with as swine.

Having accounted common the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified. By **accounted common** is not expressed a loathing and aversion such as is suggested by the rendering **polluted, unholy.** It means **common** in the sense of: "not holy."⁴ The enormity of so considering the blood appears from what that blood is. It is **the blood of the covenant**⁵ **wherewith he was sanctified.** How great must be the criminality that treats such blood as if it were no more than any other blood! It is affirmed⁶ that the expression: **wherewith he was sanctified** compels us to understand that the Apostle describes a person that has had "an inward experience of a former sanctification of heart and life," i. e., a converted and regenerate person. But it is plain from 1 Cor. vii. 14 that the verb ἡγιασθή cannot of itself shut us up to that understanding. For in

¹ von Hof.² von Hof.; comp. Matt. v. 13; vii. 6.³ Comp. ix. 20.⁴ Against Del., Alford.⁵ Comp. Acts x. 14, 15.⁶ By Del., Alford.

the place referred to, the Apostle affirms that: "the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife" (*ἡγιασται ἐν τῇ γυναίκι*), "and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the brother" (*ἡγιασται ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ*). And this representation admits of the indignant exclamation: what does the infidel husband deserve who abuses and dishonors the wife by whom he was sanctified! Moreover, our Author's use of *ἡγιαζω*, so far from compelling the understanding claimed above, plainly gives us to understand something different. We have learned¹ that he represents "sanctifying" as antecedent to "perfecting." Yet "perfecting" means itself no more than that gracious state of the truly regenerate in which they boldly draw near to God. Of "perfecting," however, the Apostle teaches ver. 14, that: "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." And we have learned, that when he says: Christ "has perfected forever," he means, not the experience of that benefit by believers, but Christ's finished work. As regards Christ's doing, He perfected believers when He made His offering once for all. And in this sense it is proper to say of the offering of Christ, to all whom it concerns, believing or not: if you slight this way of salvation you trample under foot the sacrifice by which you have been perfected. Moreover, at ver. 10, the Apostle says, in the same sense: "we have been sanctified (*ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμεν*)" "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This means, that on Christ's part all was done that sanctifies us when His offering was made. And agreeably to that, we may call on believing and unbelieving alike, and point to that offering, saying: behold the sacrifice by which you have been sanctified! It is obvious that nothing essential is changed if we say: behold the **blood of the covenant wherewith you have been sanctified**. It is not only proper to say this, but in our context, where we have this expression, it is improper to understand it in any other sense. For that only is the sense in which the sanctifying efficacy of Christ's sacrifice and blood has been set forth in the extended argument from which the Apostle proceeds to the exhortation and warning of which our text forms a part. The

¹ See above after ver. 14.

reiterated truth has been, that Christ's body and blood, offered once for all, sanctified forever, perfected forever. Whatever these words mean in our context, the effect is expressly a "forever-effect." That it plainly is when considered as Christ's part of the work. But when by : **have been sanctified** is understood the actual experience of saving regeneration, what becomes of this forever-effect, in one that treats as common the blood that has sanctified him, until he is overtaken with judgment. Thus it appears, that so far from being constrained by : **has been sanctified** to understand the regenerating effect of true conversion, we are to understand a provision for sanctifying sinners that has been made. And "it is worthy of remark," indeed (though in the very opposite sense from which Alford makes the remark), how Calvin interprets our ἐν ᾧ ἡγιασθη: *Valde indignum est sanguinem Christi, qui sanctificationis nostrae materia est profanare.* So, too, "by which expiation has been made,"¹ though bad translation, is true interpretation.

But all need for the foregoing disquisition is obviated for those that concur in our interpretation, that our vers. 28, 29 present the case of those called "the adversaries," ver. 27, and not the case of those, the Author included, that is proposed by the expression : "if we sin willingly," etc., ver. 26. Understanding the Apostle to have "the adversaries" in mind, it is impossible to understand : **wherewith he was sanctified** to point to anything else than that which Christ's blood provided, when, by His sacrifice, it became **the blood of the covenant**. At the same time, the foregoing disquisition *corroborates* the view that the Apostle is representing the case of adversaries of Christ who were never anything else.

Having treated the Spirit of grace with contempt. By the **Spirit of grace** is meant the Spirit that confers grace,² and not the Spirit as a gracious gift.³ The latter interpretation is possible only to one who supposes that the Apostle describes a person once regenerate : though even then it is not justified by the Author's mode of discourse. Only twice,⁴ beside the present

¹ Stuart.³ de Wette, Lün., von Hof.² Del., Riehm, Alford.⁴ ii. 4; vi. 4.

instance, does our Author refer to the Holy Spirit as an agent in effecting our salvation. But in all of these he represents that agency precisely as it is elsewhere represented in the New Testament, for which the words of Christ may be taken as the exponent: "he shall bear witness of me."¹ In ii. 4 the Spirit confirms the spoken gospel of salvation by his "distributions." As at xiii. 20, the Author says: "the God of peace," meaning that God is the dispenser of peace to us, so here he says: **the Spirit of grace**, meaning that the Spirit is the dispenser of grace to us. The **grace** which the Spirit dispenses is the whole benefit of that which is God's purpose of grace,² making it our personal experience, with all that confirms and establishes us in the assurance and enjoyment of it.³ That the Author does not amplify these topics, or more frequently refer to them, is sufficiently explained by his subject, which is Christ and His work. What is missed in express words, is abundantly present in the Author's performance, which, as an inspired communication of the Holy Spirit, is from beginning to end a witness of the Holy Spirit to Christ, and taking of the things of Christ and showing them to men. In the order of our topics, Christ the Son of God, His atoning blood, and the Spirit that applies the benefit of Christ, we have the uniform New Testament mode of representation, and consequently Paul's. That it is common to the New Testament, and especially characteristic of Paul, is not to be dealt with as something the Author borrows from Paul.⁴ It is one among many reasons for believing that our Author is Paul.

It is affirmed that the expression: **treat the Spirit of grace with contempt** implies a sin that "is impossible without an inward experience of grace."⁵ Such a statement can only excite our wonder, in view of the words of Christ, Matt. xii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 10; and especially in one who rejects the view that **the Spirit of grace** means "the spirit which is the gift of grace," and affirms that it means "the Spirit as the source of grace." One can insult the Spirit as the source of grace, by refusing His grace, and opposing all the manifestations of it. That is what the

¹ John xv. 26; xvi. 7-14.² ii. 9, 10.³ iii. 4; xiii. 9.⁴ Against Riehm, p. 56, on: "the God of peace."⁵ Del.

adversaries of Christ did when they ascribed the miracles that He did by the finger of God to the agency of the prince of devils.¹ And such adversaries the Jews continued to be who rejected Christ, and on them judgment was coming.² These are the ones to whom the Apostle refers in the character he describes. And agreeably to the teaching of Christ, in the passages above referred to, he mentions insulting the Holy Spirit last as the climax of criminality.

Thus he has put the case, leaving it to the imagination of his readers to represent how great must be the punishment of such criminality, and to remember that that is what is left for the supposed situation, when one has willingly sinned by turning from the sacrifice of Christ.

The Apostle has not proposed to the imagination *what* shall be the punishment of the adversaries of Christ, but *how dreadful* it must be. In this respect the imagination will be affected, not only by the contemplation of the criminality, but also by the thought of who is the judge and executive. Accordingly, the Apostle proceeds:

Ver. 30. For we know him that said ; Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompense, saith the Lord ; and again : The Lord shall judge his people. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

In these verses the Apostle clothes his thought in scripture language. It is essential to the interpretation of his meaning to determine whether he uses the language with the meaning it has in its original context or not. For, unless we refer to that context, the language as we here read it is liable to be understood in a way different from what it expresses in its original position. The words of our ver. 30 are found Deut. xxxii. 35, 36, the words of the second clause being found also Ps. cxxxv. 14. The Author evidently has in mind the passage in Deuteronomy. But there, and as they reappear in Ps. cxxxv., the meaning of the words is, that God will judge His people to do them justice against their adversaries ; and the vengeance to be recompensed is for the latter. Moreover, at Rom. xii. 19, where our first clause is found in identical words, the appeal is still the same, giving

¹ Mark. iii. 22-30.

² Comp. Acts xiii. 44-52.

assurance to God's people that He will vindicate them against their enemies. Only very compelling reasons in our context can justify us in supposing that our Author uses the same language here to express that God will judge, *i. e.*, condemn *His people*, and visit vengeance on them.¹ Such constraint is laid on the reader if he supposes, as is common, that from ver. 26 the Author has in mind, in all he represents, the character designated by the expression: "if we willingly sin." Then the context presents only one character to which the judging and the execution can appertain, viz., apostate believers. But this constraint does not attend our interpretation, which has marked and maintained a distinction between the Apostle and his readers designated in the expression: "if we willingly sin," and others designated by: "the adversaries." It is those meant in the first expression who are to "consider" how dreadful must be the punishment deserved by those meant by the second. And, in our ver. 30, it is those meant by the first expression that are subject of the verb: **we know**. And if the scripture language now used constrains us to understand **his people** to be, not punished, but vindicated, we have the proper subject for that in the subject of the verb: **we know**. And if the **vengeance** requires for object those that are "the adversaries" of God, we have them also in those whose criminality has just been "considered." But, not merely does the presence of these distinct and contrasted subjects, viz., the Apostle and his readers on the one hand, and the adversaries on the other, relieve us of the constraint that leads readers to understand the present Old Testament language in a way so different from its original sense, and thus of resorting to various shifts² to reconcile the senses. We actually find in the original sense of the words the very meaning that is appropriate to all the context down to ver. 34.

The Apostle says: **For we know him that says**. Were it merely his object to bring the notion of God as judge and avenger to complete the considerations needful for imagining how dreadful must be the punishment of the criminality just described, it would be enough to say: "For we know that God hath said."

¹ As most commentaries represent.

² Comp. Lindsay, Alford, von Hof.

And if the Apostle identified those designated by : "if we willingly sin" with those expressed by : "the adversaries," and comprehended all in the criminal character portrayed ver. 29, it seems unlikely that he would say : **we know him**. This expression, however, is most appropriate to those who, in the language quoted, are named as **his people** in the sense of Deut. xxxii. 36 ; Ps. cxxxv. 14. It is expressive of confidence, and of the feeling that God is for them, and thus that what God says is as their defender and judge in the sense of the original utterance.

Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord, is not a literal quotation of Deut. xxxii. 35 from either the Hebrew or the LXX. But it repeats the words exactly as they are found Rom. xii. 19. This can give cause for wonder and perplexity only to those that have resolved that Paul did not write both epistles. In support of that view, appeal is made to the supposed different sense in which the words are used here. But if, as the present exposition shows, the sentiment, as well as the expression is identical in both places, that reason for supposing different Authors disappears. Regarding the textual question, whether to retain : **saith the Lord**,¹ seeing the evidence for and against is so nearly balanced we prefer to retain it.² We cannot repress the suspicion that the view, at present fashionable, that rejects Paul's authorship of our epistle, has influenced editors to reject the words. As our words are used Rom. xii. 19, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath, for it is written : Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord," the object is to encourage believers to patience and to perseverance in well-doing, while suffering from their adversaries. To this end the language is quoted as a promise on which they may rely. Leaving retribution for evil to God who will vindicate His people, the Apostle would have *them* attend to "overcoming evil with good."

¹ Rejected by Tr. Tischend. viii., after having resumed it in vii., W. & H. Version 1881.

² Retained by Del., Lün., von Hof., Alford. "The previous τὸν εἰπόντα seeming to make it superfluous, it is probable that the omission may have been an early one due to a sense of convenience and propriety." Del. Similarly von Hof.

The object of quoting the same divine assurance here is the same, with only the difference, that there is no reference to overcoming evil with good. The latter is inappropriate to readers whose danger was, not retaliation, but yielding to persecution and seduction.

The Lord will judge his people, is said, then, with the same meaning as in the other places where it occurs. God will take the part of His people against their adversaries, who are also His. The whole passage, Deut. xxxii. 15-43 should be read, that it may appear how our whole passage vers. 26-38 reflects the representations there. As we have noted the correspondence between Deut. xxxii. 15-34, to our vers. 26-29, so there is a correspondence between Deut. xxxii. 35-43, and our vers. 30-38. Beside the words actually quoted, we should notice: "Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift my hand to heaven, and say: I live forever. I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me . . . For he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land and to his people." This passage from which the Apostle quotes was some of the most familiar scripture to Jews,¹ and all this sentiment would be understood by his readers to be brought in along with his brief quotation. Here, as at Rom. xii. 19, the Apostle changes the language so as to make it a promise. This is interpretation, as well as citation. Yet as interpretation, it requires for its justification the whole context of Deut. xxxii. 35-43. As an interpretation it is perfectly correct; and when contemplated in all its extent, it appears as one of the most glorious consolations of God's word. As such it was received and relied upon by the Old Testament Church; and we observe from our passage, and from Rom. xii. 19, that it is intended to be the comfort of God's people still, to secure their constancy and animate them to boldness under similar trials. And so it has been constantly used by Christians.

In view of what is singular in our interpretation, it is expe-

¹ Comp. above on i. 6.

dient to call to mind at this point, at least briefly,¹ the importance that attaches to the passage Deut. xxxii. 35-43, from which the Apostle quotes, and which he formulates as a promise. The moulding influence of chapter xxxii. of Deuteronomy on the religious thoughts of Old Testament believers appears from coincidences of expression scattered all through later books. Comp., *e. g.*, ver. 1 and Ps. l. 4; Mic. i. 2; Isa. i. 2; ver. 7, and Job viii. 8; ver. 23 and Job vi. 4; ver. 39 and Job v. 18; x. 7. Delitzsch says of this song: "it may be called the compendious outline and the common key to all prophecy."² It is not mere literary reflection of the chapter, like that indicated in the texts just cited, that justifies this statement. In Isaiah we find the future of Israel and the Messianic history portrayed in the same spirit and with the same outlines that appear in this inspired programme of coming ages from the lips and pen of Moses. We have seen³ that when Peter,⁴ and Paul⁵ refer to the situation where the chosen people become the adversaries of God by rejecting his Messiah, they express themselves in language drawn from this chapter. If, then, we have, as in our verse 30, such an expression as: **Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord**, formulating the sentiment of Deut. xxxii. 35-43 into a word of promise, we must suppose it has the sense of the original passage, and has that sense in all its fullness and importance. *In these words, then, we have a promise* as solemn and emphatic, as that referred to xii. 26, and indeed the same promise.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It is usual to treat this as a reminiscence of 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, notwithstanding that expresses a sentiment so different from this, and so inappropriate. For there David has a reserve of comfort in the mercy of God; while here the dreadfulfulness of falling into God's hands is the exclusive notion. We think, however, that the Apostle has only in mind the passage which

¹ Comp. Lange-Schaff, Bib. Work., Deut. Introd. § 7, "The Manifold Importance of Deuteronomy," where may be found many details bearing especially on chap. xxxii.

² Comp. in Lange-Schaff, Nagelsbach on Isaiah i. 2.

³ See above extended note after ii. 3.

⁴ Acts ii. 40.

⁵ Rom. x. 19.

he has just formulated into a promise as it concerns the people of God. But in the words before us he expresses its sentiment as it concerns "the adversaries." We have quoted above some of the language to the point. But it is especially the following words that are reflected here: "See now that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say: I live forever."¹ Here is language that suggests the expression of our ver. 31, and explains every word in it. **Living God** here denotes the unchangeable, dreadful, and inexorable God, and expresses that He lives now as then, to do now as He threatened then.

Ver. 32. **But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured much conflict of suffering, 33. partly being made a spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly having become partakers of those that were thus living.**

It has been usual to suppose that the Apostle makes a transition here from solemn warning to commendation, as he does at vi. 9-12. But, with the meaning we have ascertained for vers. 30, 31, it becomes plain that the only transition is that which began already in those verses. Giving the considerations with reference to God, that justify the anticipation of dreadful punishment for the adversaries, has involved the reference to the grounds for God's procedure in such cases, viz., His doing justice to the cause of His people, and vindicating them against their oppressors. *Now the Apostle turns to remind his readers that they have had the experience that warrants them in looking for this vindication on their behalf.* In doing this he turns from regarding the situation as one perilous with threatening apostasy, and thus guilt, on their part, to treating it as a situation wherein they are the feeble objects of a malice that would wrest them from God and subject them to destruction. This is precisely the transition that occurs in Deut. xxxii. 15-43, at vers. 35, 36, where the Apostle quotes: "For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power

¹ Deut. xxxii. 39, 40.

is gone, and there is none shut up, or left," ver. 36. If this transition and progress of the Apostle's thought has been usually missed, and if even now it be challenged when pointed out, that is only what has occurred with the passage in Deuteronomy, on which the Apostle, as it seems to us, moulds his discourse at this point. In the Deuteronomy passage, just as the reader expects the discourse to begin to breathe out retribution against the faithless people of God, who have turned to idols, he finds instead, that the fury of vengeance is turned against those whose opposition has caused the people to err, *i. e.*, against idols and idolaters. The sentiment of the transition is finely expressed by the Psalmist's words: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," Ps. cv. 15. Such is the transition of the Apostle's discourse in which we find ourselves at the verses before us.

The expressions we are now to examine agree with the view just presented. Were this a transition from warning to commendation, like vi. 9 sqq., then it would be the effort of the Apostle, as there, to show that *he* has not forgotten the evidences of former faithfulness. It would be likely, also, that, as there, he would mention actually existing proof of the same. Instead of that, however, he bids *his readers* call to remembrance the significant facts, *which are facts of the past*. It was for *them* to remember, if they would feel the effect of the promise just appealed to. The facts referred to occurred **after they were enlightened** ($\varphi\omega\tau\iota\sigma\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$).¹ As this expression is intended to mark a point of time, it must mean when the readers became Christians;² and, as the reference is to them as a body, it must mean when they became a Christian church of the region where they were. Nothing in the present passage helps us to understand where the readers belonged geographically. But it furnishes proof positive that the readers were of the same period as the Apostles, and not of a second generation.³ The readers themselves are to remember the period of enlightenment and the subsequent trials as personal experiences. That period was when Jews as such were largely gathered into churches, and the trials were such as came from

¹ Comp. vi. 4.² von Hof.³ Comp. at ii. 3.

Jewish persecution. Both of these belong to the first generation of Christians.

At the time referred to, they **endured much suffering**. Neither this expression, nor the following amplification of it, gives us a clear hint of the precise nature of the sufferings. They were such as characterized the time, and were sure to be inflicted by those that had power to persecute, or could subsidize such power. No one has yet succeeded in identifying the persecution to which the present description must be referred. We infer from the context that it was Jewish persecution, such as Saul of Tarsus carried on, that aimed at destroying all Jews that would be Christians, or making them blaspheme.¹ This, which has been the common view, agrees exactly with the interpretation we make of the passage before us. The sufferings were inflicted because they were believers in Christ, to make them turn from the faith.

What is peculiar about the amplification of the sufferings referred to, is that *the Apostle purposely describes them in a way to comprehend all his readers as having endured them*. If not directly, still indirectly, or constructively they had endured the assaults of the adversaries of Christ. All, therefore, ought to feel the support that comes from the assurance: "the Lord will judge his people." Such is the comprehensive force of ver. 33. They were **made a spectacle**, perhaps in very theatres (*θεατρικὸν ὄργανον*); or they made what others suffered in this way their own, as **partakers with them that thus lived**. *Ἀναστροφόμενων* is best rendered conformably to its ethical use elsewhere in the New Testament, where it means: "manner of living."

Following this comprehensive statement is ver. 34, which is introduced by **for**, because *it* adduces what substantiates the second clause of verse 33, which, as something less obvious than the first clause to those of whom that was true, needs elucidation; like the: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."²

Ver. 34. **For ye both had compassion on them that were in**

¹ Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

² Matt. xxv. 40.

bonds,¹ and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession, and an abiding one.

It is supposed² that: **had compassion**, etc., corresponds to: "were partakers," etc., ver. 33; and: **took joyfully**, etc., to: "were made a spectacle;" thus taking our verse as explanatory of the whole of ver. 33, and so the two particulars as referring to different experiences. If, however, our ver. 34 is explanatory only of: "were partakers," etc., ver. 33, then the two particulars of the verse do not express different things, but the latter refers to the practical proof that was given of the former. They had shown their sympathy by sharing their substance, say by paying the fines of those imprisoned. Thus their own substance was spent. And because they suffered this loss by reason of violence that made the necessity, the Apostle calls it: **the spoiling of their goods**. With less motive for so strong a term, he says: "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, that I might minister unto you," (2 Cor. xi. 8). If such be the meaning, then accepting the reading *ἐαυτοὺς*,³ we have the appropriate antitheses, of what they, and of what others possess.⁴ Having surrendered their goods *in this way*, they know that while others have *those* goods, **they themselves have an abiding possession**, viz., a heavenly.⁵

Ver. 35. **Cast not away, therefore, your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.**

In the experiences, of which the Apostle reminds them, they had shown great **boldness** (*παρρησία*)⁶ in believing. That was *their* boldness, in a sense quite different from the boldness referred to ver. 19, which is spoken of as something they have along with the Author only in view of the foregoing argument that shows they ought to have it. Referring, then, to the boldness they actually had by **therefore** (*οὖν*),⁷ the readers are exhorted not to **cast it away**. They could only cease to be bold by what would be tantamount to casting away willfully the boldness they had;

¹ *μὴν* rejected by Lach. Tr. Tisch., W. and H., version 1881, Del., Lün., Alford; defended by von Hof.

² Lün. Alford.

³ With Lach., Tr. Tisch., W. and H. Version 1881; against von Hof., Alford, Del.

⁴ Comp. von Hof.

⁵ Comp. Matt. xix. 21; Luke, xvi. 9, 11.

⁶ Comp. Acts iv. 13, 29, 31; Eph. vi. 19, 20.

⁷ So Lün.

because they had such strong reason for being bold notwithstanding all their adversaries might do. Thus the Apostle says not : do not lose your boldness, but : **cast not away**. He follows this with the affirmation of the strong reason for maintaining the boldness : **which hath great recompense of reward** (*μισθὸς ἀποδοσίαν*). We have here the Author's peculiar word.¹ His use of it does not permit us to suppose that the present affirmation has reference to the "abiding substance" mentioned in ver. 34,² or to positive heavenly substance. At ii, 2 it means the recompense of transgressions and disobedience. And at xi. 26 it may mean, and we suppose it does, the recompense to be visited on Pharaoh and Egypt for "afflicting the people of God." And the thought of our whole context, vers. 26-28, requires us to suppose that here the word has the same meaning. At vers. 30, 31, we have seen that the Author makes a transition from viewing the "judgment a-coming on the adversaries," as a calamity for them, to viewing it as a deliverance for the people of God. In the latter aspect he has continued to regard it, while reminding the readers of what they have endured, and boldly endured, from the persecutions of such adversaries. And with the same combination of ideas that leads him to say, vers. 30, 31 : we know that God will deliver his people by a judgment ; it is dreadful for those that fall into the hands of the living God ; so he says here : continue to maintain your bold confession of Christ against those that afflict you, for it has a great recompense, deliverance for you, but vengeance for the adversaries ; the Lord will judge his people. Viewed in this aspect, the recompense appears as a promise, as we observed at ver. 30. Accordingly, the Apostle proceeds :

Ver. 36. For ye have need of patience, in order that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

It is generally supposed, that : **the promise** here refers to the reward of the life to come, and that our vers. 35, 36, appeal to that reward and exhort to patience till it is received. Thus it is assumed that the expression itself carries in it all that meaning, as if, *ἐπαγγελία* were a sort of Christian technical term. We have already seen that such is not the fact.³ Up to the present the

¹ Comp. ii. 2; xi. 26.

² As von Hof.

³ See above at vi. 12.

word has occurred seven times. At iv. 1 it is the promise of entering God's rest. At vi. 12 "the promises" are many, and different as the persons that received them. At vi. 15 "the promise" is that given to Abraham of a numerous posterity. At vi. 17 "the heirs of the promise" are those that have received the promise discoursed on at iv. 1 sqq. At vii. 6 "the promises" are all those with which Abraham had been favored. At viii. 6 the "better promises" are the present benefits of the new covenant as foretold by Jeremiah and recited viii. 10 sqq. At ix. 15 "the promise of the everlasting inheritance," is the definite thing supposed to be meant by ἐπαγγελ. as a technical term; but it is to be noted that the definition is in the expression as a whole, and not in the meaning that ἐπαγγελ. carries in itself. Thus it appears, from the foregoing use of ἐπαγγελ. in our epistle, that in every instance its meaning must be determined by the context, and that the Author's discourse does not invest it with a meaning of its own, so that when he says: "the promise" he means something, viz., the future reward, as "the promise" *par excellence*.

The present context points to the promise expressed ver. 30, that God will judge his people, *i. e.*, vindicate them. When he does that in the case of the readers, and all situated like them, they will receive that promise in the way of actual fulfillment. On *χομίζω*, Mid., see above under vi. 12.

But they **have need of patience** till that event; and the patience must be sustained by such boldness as they have already shown. Thus the Author says: "cast not away your boldness, for ye have need of patience, in order that, **having done the will of God**, ye may receive," etc. Thus: "doing the will of God," appears as another expression for boldness maintained with patience. And receiving the promise in question is represented as the consequence of "doing the will of God." For we must here, as usually, construe the present participial clause as expressing something antecedent to what is expressed by the direct verb following,¹ and not something attendant upon or coincident with the direct predicate.² The **doing the will of God** meant here is such as must correspond to the representation of vers. 32-34, which is the im-

¹ With von Hof.

² Against Del., Alford, Davidson.

mediate suggestion for saying they have need of patience. It is often spoken of elsewhere as the will of God. When Paul would not be constrained from going into the lion's mouth of Jewish persecution, his companions desisted from dissuading him, saying: "God's will be done."¹ To the saints in Philippi that had suffered much and still suffered from the same cause, the Apostle writes in a strain parallel with the sentiment of the passage before us: "Stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing affrighted by your adversaries; which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God, because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer in his behalf; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me;" adding a little after: "Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."² We have already pointed to the related passage Rom. xii. 19.

The need of patience is not interminable.

Ver. 37. **For yet a very little while. He that is coming shall come, and shall not tarry.**

To speak first of the Old Testament reference of these words, the first: *μικρόν ὅσον ὅσον* = **a very little while** is from Isa. xxvi. 20, according to LXX. And yet so brief a phrase would not justify us in supposing an allusion to that passage, exceptional as this phrase is in scriptural Greek, were it not for the appropriateness to our context of the passage where it is found. It reads: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." The *μικρόν ὅσον ὅσον* "is to be regarded as a nominative absolute (like *ἔτι μικρόν*, John xiv. 9; comp. Isa. xxix. 7, in the Hebrew), *restat panlulum temporis*."³ Or "nothing more than an *ἔστιν* is to be supplied."⁴ As an allusion to Isa. xxvi. 20, the expression does not denote that the indignation will soon come, but that it will soon be over. And this is the sentiment that ver. 36 leads us to expect. The Apostle would express that the need for patience will not be

¹ Acts xxi. 14.

² Phil. i. 27-30; iv. 5; comp. 1 Pet. iv. 16-19.

³ Del.

⁴ Lün.

long.¹ This gives the coloring to what is further said, which, while it portends calamity to some, is to be deliverance from the situation that, in the readers, calls for patience and doing the will of God in suffering Jewish persecution on behalf of Christ.² The present is the time of distress for them. The approaching calamity will be their release.

The next clause : **He that is coming shall come, and shall not tarry**, with the words of ver. 38, is language borrowed from Hab. ii. 3, 4, but too much modified to be understood as a prophetic quotation. But while the Author uses the scripture language to clothe his own thought and give it more solemn expression, the language must derive its fitness for this because of some of its original meaning clinging to it.

The words : **He that is coming . . . not tarry** represent Hab. ii. 3, which, speaking of a vision of the fall of the Chaldean monarchy, says of *the vision* : "though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." The LXX. rendering this, makes Jehovah Himself, and not the vision, the subject of the verbs **he shall come**, etc., ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἔξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίσῃ. This change our Author marks still more precisely by writing ὁ ἐρχόμενος. Many³ take this ὁ ἐρχόμενος = **He that is coming**, as a designation for the Messiah, and the meaning to be His second coming. But the whole context from ver. 28 directs our thoughts to the retribution coming on those that rejected their Messiah,⁴ while ver 30 presents God as the judge of His own people to do them justice against their adversaries. **He that is coming**, then, means God as so represented ; and designated thus, in language borrowed from the prophet, the meaning is, that He comes to visit retribution as when, against the Chaldean power, "he went forth for the salvation of His people, even for salvation with His anointed," and "the mountains saw Him and trembled. The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation."⁵

¹ So Calvin.

² Comp. 2 Thess. i. 4-10.

³ Lün., Del., Alford, Hammond, Owen, Lindsay, etc.

⁴ So Ebrard, Stuart and McLean and Baumgarten, though making Christ subject.

⁵ Hab. iii. 10, 11, 13.

The Apostle represents this event as the end of needing to be patient, and as the beginning of receiving the promise. It must be because of this connection of thought that most readers have supposed that the **coming** can only refer to the final judgment. But a comparison of xii. 25–28, where the Author recurs to the same thoughts, confirms the impression that our present passage ought of itself to make, viz., that we are here introduced into the same sphere of prophetic events that are represented in the words of Jesus when He spoke of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.¹ In those words what is near and what is remote are blended in a way that makes it difficult to distinguish the particular reference. But everything in our passage constrains us to understand that the Apostle appeals to this prophecy of Jesus, as it lived in the minds of disciples, and also that he appeals to it as it referred to events that were near. His very words reflect the language of that prophecy. For Jesus said of the period of persecution preceding the catastrophe: “In your patience ye shall win your souls;”² and also: “but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”³ And of the event itself he said: “But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh,” (ἐγγίξει ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις ὑμῶν). With these compare the expressions and sentiment of our vers. 36–39. We have noted that the Author’s language (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) does not expressly refer to the event as the coming of Christ, but as the coming of God to judge His people for their deliverance. The same is true at xii. 25 sqq. This is no discrepancy. The Apostle similarly makes God the agent in the destruction attending the coming of Christ in 2 Thess. i. 4–10.

The Author proceeds in language drawn from the same source (Hab. ii. 3, 4). Our ver. 38, corresponds to the LXX. rendering of Hab. ii. 4; but the clauses are in an inverted order.⁴ This illustrates the Author’s freedom in citing the Old Testament. The order of the clauses that he gives suits his own order of

¹ Matt. xxiv; Luke xxi. Comp. McLean.

² Luke xxi. 19.

³ Matt. xxiv. 13.

⁴ For criticism of the text comp. Del.

thought; it has, also, the effect of obviating any ambiguity as to the subject of *ὑποστείληται*.¹

Ver. 38 *a*. But my righteous one by faith shall live.

So the first clause reads, ambiguously, leaving the reader to determine whether **by faith** qualifies **righteous** or **shall live**. The same words occur with the same ambiguity Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11. The LXX. reads *ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου*; whereas our text reads: *ὁ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως*. The *μού*, indeed, may belong to the *πίστεως* though separated from it by *ἐκ*,² and thus only the order of words may be different from the LXX. But no emphasis or other advantage seems to be secured by transposing the *μού* in that case. On the other hand, removing it from the *πίστεως* corrects the LXX. rendering so far as to make it nearer the Hebrew, which reads; “the righteous one by his faith shall live.” The *μού* may be explained, if we ascertain who is the speaker in the first person singular in the two clauses of our verse. It is usual to understand that the Author introduces these words as God speaking. But a scrutiny of his style through the entire epistle affords no other instance of his doing so without explicitly denoting that God is the speaker.³

The freedom the Author takes here with the scripture language he uses (transposing the clauses, conforming in the first clause neither to the Hebrew nor to the LXX., adopting in the second clause the LXX. which is no proper translation of the Hebrew), leads us to suppose that we have another instance of clothing his own thoughts in the sacred language.⁴ We thus understand the Apostle himself to speak in the first person,⁵ though in this epistle he rarely does so.⁶ This gives a pointed meaning to the words before us, and they appear no more abrupt than when they are taken as God speaking. Taking the words so, the *δέ* is not without significance, as it would be if only a part of the quoted language. It is adversative of the foregoing, introducing the expression of *how* those that are spared in the coming destruction receive the benefit, or *who* they are. If we

¹ Boehme in Bleek.

² So von Hof.; comp. Matt. viii. 8; John ix. 15.

³ Comp., *e, g.*, xiii. 5.

⁴ Comp. above on i. 5-13; ii. 12, 13; x. 5 sqq.

⁵ So Calvin on ver. 38 *b*.

⁶ xi. 32; xiii. 19, 22, 23.

construe: "but my righteous one shall live by faith," this answers the question: how shall He live? This is the same question as ii. 3, "How shall we escape?" If we construe: "but my righteous one by faith shall live," it answers the question: who shall live? The meaning in either case comes to the same thing. Faith is the saving and life-giving quality. We may leave the expression in its ambiguity. Influenced by the sacred language he adopts for expressing the truth, the Apostle says: "my righteous one," which signifies a personal complacency in the character mentioned, that prepares for the expression of personal displeasure in the following clause.

Ver. 38 *b*. **And if he shrink back, my soul hath not pleasure in him.**

The *zaí* = **and**, is no part of the language quoted from the LXX., but the Author's own, and is one of the indications that he is speaking his own sentiment. The translation of the LXX., which is exactly reproduced in the words that follow the **And**, is no proper rendering of the Hebrew, which reads: "Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him." As the Apostle intends no citation, we need not¹ attempt to trace any identity of sentiment in language so different. The *zaí* = **And**, is not to be rendered by: "yet," or the like, as if our clause expressed the notion of the subject of the foregoing clause becoming *not* a righteous one, and devoid of faith.² It is simply conjunctive, adding what may be, and is expressed of the same subject as there described. The subject of *ὑποστειλῆται* is *ὁ δίκαιος* of the foregoing clause, and it is inadmissible to substitute another subject, *e. g.*, "any man."³ That substitution might be ascribed to dogmatic scruples relating to the doctrine of the perseverance of the regenerate. But, beside its being inadmissible to save the doctrine by straining a translation, the proper understanding of what the Apostle actually says shows that the fears for the doctrine are groundless.

The verb *ὑποστειλλω* occurs beside in the New Testament only Acts xx. 20, 27: Gal. ii. 12; the noun *ὑποστολή* only in the following verse. The words denote "shrinking back" or "flinch-

¹ As Calvin.

² Against Del.

³ Version of 1611.

ing," though timidity or similiar motives, thus halting about taking a position that demands boldness. Such is especially the sense of the verb in the middle voice. It needs some strong qualifying phrase to give it the meaning of turning the back on anything, *e. g.*, such qualification as follows the noun in the next verse. It is, therefore, forcing the word to take it as expressing apostasy. It is the misunderstanding of the foregoing context that has led readers to do this. As predicate here, with "the righteous one" for subject, only very compelling reasons could justify us in understanding it to express apostasy. We have fortunately an exact illustration of the sense in which *ποστέλλω* may be predicated of a righteous one by faith. It is in Gal. ii. 11-14. In the matter of Jewish believers recognizing the unity of Gentile believers with them by eating with them, Peter had conformed in Antioch, till some came from James. "But when they came he drew back (*ὑπέστελλεν ἑαυτόν*) and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision." For this Paul "resisted him to the face," and that "before all" the disciples. With what a sentiment of deep displeasure in his fellow Apostle, Paul did this, let the whole epistle to the Galatians speak. Peter's conduct was no apostasy, though a grave fault that compromised "the truth of the gospel." Yet it was conduct that could proceed to what would be "a shrinking back to destruction," as expressed in ver. 39. In this coincidence of thought, and of the use of a rare word, we have as striking a proof of Paul's being the Author of our epistle as that furnished by finding here his favorite text: "The just by faith shall live," quoted exactly in his singular manner. The latter trait has ever been one of the greatest difficulties for those that deny his authorship.

The appeal to Gal. ii. 11-14, shows, then, how "shrinking back" may be predicated of one described as a "righteous one by faith." We believe it is so predicated here. The Apostle then means: if such a person shrinks back in timidity, as Peter (and "the rest of the Jews" in Antioch "likewise with him, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation"), as if one were to be justified and live by the works of the law, and a man were not justified by faith, and the righteous

by faith alone did not live. In such an one he says: **I have not pleasure**, and what he means by that is best illustrated by the displeasure he showed in the case we appeal to. He does not affirm that "he has no pleasure in him."¹ That is too strong a rendering, and is occasioned, as is the rendering: "if any man draw back,"² by the notion that the Apostle means apostasy. As at x. 6 *οὐκ ἠδούρησας* expresses that God had not pleasure in sacrifices for sins, so our *οὐκ εὐδόκεῖ* expresses that when the righteous one by faith, who should have the boldness (ver. 19) which the Apostle imputes to his readers, shrinks timidly back to use ordinances of the law as if they were needful to his feeling assured that he "shall live," then the Apostle "has not pleasure in him."

And well may he say so in concluding an exhortation like the present (ver. 19–38) that follows such an argument as that of vii. 1—x. 18. We say concluding words. For here, it appears to us, the present exhortation concludes. This will appear when we consider the import of the following verse which we take to be the preface to the impressive illustrative discourse on faith comprised in chapter xi. But viewing our verses 37, 38 as a conclusion, they instantly appear most fitting as such. Then their laconic style, and the impressive use of the first person singular have peculiar appropriateness. As a conclusion of the treatment of the main subject of the epistle from the beginning to the present point, it impresses us the more we contemplate it. It applies to his readers. It sums up in one clause what they ought to be, viz., righteous ones by faith that shall live; and, with Apostolic authority and benignity, it expresses his complacency in them as such by the significant: "my." It reflects the condition of reproach that made this epistle necessary. Some were shrinking back. To such, with Apostolic authority, and firmness, he expresses his displeasure. Yet does it, not as to apostates with severity; but with mildness, as to those concerning whom he is persuaded that there were the better things (vi. 9). Regarded thus as a conclusion, our vers. 37, 38 equal in rhetori-

¹ Versions of 1611, 1881.² Version 1611.

cal finish anything that appears in this most polished writing of the New Testament.

Ver. 39. **But we are not of shrinking back to destruction, but of faith to gaining the soul.**

We prefer here the rendering of the margin in the version of 1881, though it is stiff. We have the same idiom in English, though of more limited application than in the Greek. Comp. τῆς ὁδοῦ εἶναι Acts ix. 2, which may be rendered literally and exactly. Comp. also χαρᾶς xii. 11 ; πνεύματος Luke ix. 25.

The close connection of this verse with what follows xi. 1 sqq. is generally recognized.¹ But it has the manner of a transition to a fresh topic, and as a matter of fact, we observe that the faith, here so emphatically mentioned, is immediately amplified and glorified in a very remarkable way. So that our verse forms a preface. It is not inconsistent with its character as such, that it has a logical connection with what immediately precedes. That connection is strongly antithetical. It is usual to read as if: **shrinking back to destruction** were the same as "shrink back" of ver. 38, only developed to its full significance, and thus, as if the Apostle denies of himself and readers, what is there imputed to some conditionally. This, however, is a misapprehension. If it were said: if a righteous man doubts, he is to be blamed; but we are not of them that doubt to destruction, it would be understood that, while admitting that some are doubting, it is affirmed that it is not, or must not be doubting that goes the length that incurs destruction. And were it added: **we are of faith to gaining the soul**, the aim would be understood to be to strengthen the faith. Such is the signification of our present verse. We have seen that **shrinking back** may be predicated of one righteous by faith, as doubt and timidity may be.² We have seen what that may be by a most exact illustration, which shows that it is something far short of apostasy, and farther still from an obdurate and reprobate condition. In the light of that meaning, what is now affirmed is the explicit denial that shrinking back to the degree that incurs destruction may be predicated of one

¹ Comp. Calvin, Del., Ebrard, von Hof., Davidson.

² Comp. 2 Cor. iv. 9.

righteous by faith.¹ It is affirmed in the most expressive way. The Apostle denies for himself and readers any relation to the thing : viz., **shrinking back to destruction**. He says : we are not of that thing ; and not : we are not of them that do that thing. This he completes by the positive contrary : **but we are of faith to gaining the soul.**² And this is to say, in other words : “ my righteous one by faith shall live.” For *περιποιήσιν ψυχῆς* expresses the same with respect to *ἀπώλειαν* that *ἐύρισχω ψυχὴν* does to *ἀπόλλομι ψυχὴν*.³ And by *ψυχῇ* here is meant life.⁴

What the Apostle means by **destruction** and **life** must relate to the same thing that has been in his mind from x. 27, viz., “ the judgment a-coming on the adversaries.” He does not again use the word *ἀπώλεια* ; and he uses *ἀπόλλομι* only i. 11, in no kindred connection. We must, then, infer the meaning of *ἀπώλεια* from the use of it most kindred to the subject before us. That is found in the discourse of Jesus relating to the rejection of the Jews who rejected their Messiah. Compare in the parable of the “ Wicked Husbandmen,” Matt. xxi. 41 ; and of the “ Marriage Supper,” Matt. xxii. 7. We are thus confirmed in the view maintained above, that the Apostle has in mind the impending judgment from God that, in the destruction of Jerusalem, signalized the rejection of the Jews who rejected their Messiah, the Son of God. Shrinking back to destruction would be to become involved in that. To be of faith would be the gaining of life in that judgment.⁵

In this verse the Author has presented the truth in that abstract form⁶ that is appropriate when representing a subject that is to be amplified. That subject, stated still more abstractly, is : those that are of faith shrink not back to destruction, but gain life. Agreeably to this the Apostle proceeds in close connection :

XI. 1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen.

¹ Against Del., Alford.

² Comp. iv. 3.

³ Comp. von Hof., and Matt. xvi. 25.

⁴ de Wette ; comp. 1 Thess. v. 9, 10 ; against Del., Alford.

⁵ Comp. 1 Thess. v. 1-11.

⁶ Comp. ix. 15.

It is debated whether this may be called a definition of faith.¹ But it seems to us that the question only arises in view of the fact that the definition given here does not cover all that is represented of faith in the New Testament. Theological definition attempts such comprehensiveness, because the thing defined is, for us, all that it there appears to be in the whole New Testament or the whole Bible. From the nature of the case, this could not be thought of by an Apostle or his readers. Thus the debate is out of place. A theological definition the present verse is not, as we understand and attempt such definition. To demand this of the Apostle, or apply it as a measure of the perfection of what he writes, is to exact a prophetic intuition or inspiration exceeding anything that was ever claimed for inspiration. Such definition would not only comprehend all that had been said and written by inspiration, but also anticipate all that was afterward to be said and written, that the definition might square with that. But a definition of faith our verse is, of that kind that wise and penetrating instructors give who are original writers and pioneers in the subjects of which they treat. "Metaphysics" is thus very differently defined by an immediate disciple of Aristotle, by Clement of Alexandria, by the schoolmen, by Bacon, and by Kant. A good definition of "metaphysics" now would attempt to cover all that has been properly comprehended under it; and that would be like theological definition.

Our Author's definition covers the phenomenon as it appears in the relations in which he treats of faith. It is so far complete, that where the things that he predicates of faith are not, there is no faith. The present aim of writing may be expressed in the words of x. 35, 36: "Cast not away your confidence, which has great reward; for ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." In relation to this aim the definition is exactly to the point. For it affirms that faith is precisely what inspires the boldness and sustains the patience in question. It affirms what faith is, not what it secures to us, or that it is as something in us.² The **assurance** and **demonstration** designated, are the faith. As *our* faith, it is

¹ See Del., Alford.

² Against Alford.

these things in us. All that has been said in our epistle about believing, limits the notion of faith to believing a word of God revealing something to come. The study of the present chapter shows that it is presented there with the same limitation. It is not, then, any or all faith¹ in general that we are invited to consider. It is, however, faith with relation to any declaration by a word of God relating to anything to come, and not to one particular thing, as, *e. g.*, the promise of salvation by a Messiah. Accordingly, the personal examples adduced in what follows exhibit faith in relation to a variety of things revealed to them severally by a word of God. This is a sufficiently general notion to explain the mention of faith, here and throughout the chapter, without the article. *The double form of our definition is due* to the fact, that in the situation to which the Apostle speaks, and accordingly also, in the examples he gives, the matter for faith is not always something that can be properly said to be hoped for, *i. e.*, in the sense of desire. The impending destruction was not; and, in the case of Noah, the impending flood was not. But such things were unseen things, and faith was the demonstration of them.

In illustration of what he has affirmed faith to be, the Apostle appeals to the facts of sacred history, as, indeed, is necessary, because the faith in question relates to things revealed by a word of God. He first makes the appeal in a comprehensive way.

Ver. 2. For in this the ancients had witness borne to them.

By the ancients are meant all the worthies of the past in the history of God's people, as the following enumeration of examples shows, which includes even those mentioned in the Apocrypha. *Μαρτυρεῖσθαι*² is used of being "well spoken of, or well reported of to others."³ The same must be its meaning here, and it is particularly as the Scripture testifies in their case that the Apostle appeals to them. What the Apostle proceeds to affirm, concerning such ancient worthies as he names, is on the ground of what is represented in the Scripture. This he sometimes does in the present tense, as an historical present of the record before him. Such is the case ver. 4 (*μαρτυροῦντος*--*λαλεῖ*; also the perfect,

¹ Against Alford.

² Version of 1611, = "obtained a good report."

³ Comp. Acts vi. 3; x. 22; xvi. 1; xxii. 11.

μεμαρτύρηται ver. 5). But he does it in the past tense also, representing the testimony as having been given on the spot. Such is the case here and ver. 4, ἐμαρτυρήθη. As it is not uncommon for the English reader to understand that the testimony was borne to the ancient worthies themselves, whereby they were certified and made confident by assurances from God Himself to them, it is important to bear in mind what has just been noted. We find, indeed, expositors sometimes expressing themselves ambiguously in this matter. Thus concerning Abel: "he obtained testimony that he was righteous" (Whitby); "some token by which his own faith was strengthened" (Owen). It does not appear, however, that any considerable expositor beside Bengel has purposely so interpreted μαρτυρεῖσθαι. It is not of certifying or assuring of themselves that the Author speaks, but of the ancients being attested to all whom it may concern, *i. e.*, well reported of, and that ἐν πίστει; for ταύτῃ refers to πίστις. **In this** means "in the domain, or region, or matter, of faith:" so ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς ἀν τούτῳ, 1 Cor. xi. 23.¹ It is not easy to define the logical relation of the present statement to the foregoing definition of faith expressed by **For**. It is rather loose, and may be equivalent to saying: just this faith characterized the ancients to whom the Scripture gives such honorable testimony.² The statement is a preface that leads us to expect something to be added in verification of it. And this accordingly follows ver. 4 sqq.

The Apostle adduces his examples in the chronological order of Scripture. We see no reason but the purpose of following that order for introducing here the affirmation contained in verse 3, which expresses an effect of faith in us, and not in the ancients. The matter referred to occupies the foremost place in the Scriptures. As something to be apprehended by faith, it concerns all generations alike. The briefest way to express that all persons of faith of all time have apprehended this truth, as faith must, is to say, as the Author does: **by faith we perceive**. To say: "by faith they perceived," would be too narrow for a truth so universal.

Ver. 3. **By faith we understand that the ages have been pre-**

¹ Alford.

² Comp. Lün.

pared by the word of God, so that not out of things apparent hath that which is seen been made.

Against the rendering¹ that connects the *μή* with *φανομένων* = "things not apparent," see Alford. It belongs to the whole clause.² The *εἰς τὸ* = **so that**, is telic³ and not ecclatic,⁴ and makes the clause expressive of intention. By *τοῦς αἰῶνας* we understand, as at i. 2, not the material creations merely, but these as they are related to periods of time, and so as having history.⁵ Thus, as an expression, it includes the visible, material world, but denotes more than that world as made once and so continuing as made. It denotes that world with all the changes that constitute its phenomena, particularly as relates to mankind. The notion of many worlds in the modern astronomical sense is an anachronism when applied to our Author's words.

It is here affirmed that the ages were prepared or disposed (*καταρτίσθαι*) by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made (*γεγονέναι* = "come about") from things apparent. The point of this statement is not that the ages were prepared by the word of God, but that they were so made with the intent here expressed.⁶ This is not a mere matter of observation, nor is it something merely apprehended as a thing we read, say in scripture. It is something we **understand**, if received by the mind at all. Thus the Apostle appropriately writes: *νοοῦμεν*. And this understanding we have **by faith**.

This grammatical and logical interpretation of the verse is readily ascertained. But the thing we are said to understand is difficult of explanation. Are *φανόμενα* and *τὸ βλεπόμενον* synonyms, by which, for elegance sake, the Author avoids the repetition of the same sound?⁷ Or do they denote different things? The former is correct. The latter notion offers no meaning except to such as see in our verse a cropping out of Alexandrian philosophy in the Author.⁸ All that we have learned of the Author opposes our resorting to such aid in interpreting him.

¹ Of Chrys.; Del., etc.

² von Hof.; comp. 2 Thess. ii. 2.

³ Lün., Del., von Hof.

⁴ Alford, etc.

⁵ So Alford; Moll; Farrar, "Early days of Christianity," chap. xviii. § 8.

⁶ von Hof.

⁷ So Riehm. p. 57.

⁸ Comp. Del.

What is the intention here expressed? "The meaning is: so that, according to the counsel of God, the fact was guarded against, that what is seen should issue from things apparent, consequently mankind from the beginning would be remanded to the necessity of faith."¹ As for the things in the Apostle's mind in so expressing himself, it is reasonable to suppose that he should mean some things more particularly than things universally; and what they might be we may infer from the preceding part of the epistle. His reference to **ages** (*αἰῶνα*)² has been in connection with the history of salvation. His definition of faith makes it the demonstration of things hoped for, but not seen (ver. 1, comp. ver. 7); thus when faith and hope cease, the same things will be things seen. His use of the words "faith" and "believing" has been exclusively with reference to "the world to come,"³ and the "promise" of salvation.⁴ It is safest, and it is sufficient to interpret the present meaning from these elements. The Apostle says **we understand**, with particular reference to himself and readers as in the foregoing chapter. With respect to the ages, what is understood is, that what is seen has not come about from what is apparent. This expresses that the potencies of things seen were not in preceding phenomena. They originated in the word of God, the word of power. This makes the word of God the sole reliance in reference to all things, things seen now, and things to be seen. This we understand **by faith**, which means, on the assurance received from God and believed. This does not mean only the word of revelation concerning the creation (Gen. i.), but that, together with all that in scripture gives the same assurance. Taking: **the worlds** in the sense already explained, not only the word of God making the earth, but the same word upholding it and disposing its history, is necessary to give this assurance.⁵ With this understanding of our verse, we find it mentions *our* faith in the same way as in the instances that follow. It is not a faith with reference to what has happened, and thus a consequence, while the following instances mention faith as an antecedent to something done by means of it. *Our* faith also has

¹ Lün.² i. 2; vi. 5; ix. 26.³ vi. 5; x. 38.⁴ iv. 2; vi. 12.⁵ Comp. 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7, where *λόγῳ* is used as *ῥήματι* here.

for its consequence that, so understanding how the ages have come about, we live by faith.

Ver. 4. **By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he was borne witness to that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaks.** Comp. Gen. iv. 3 sqq.

When the Apostle says that it was **by faith** that Abel did as here recited, it is precisely as in ver. 3, he says: "by faith we understand;" that is, it is *his* affirmation, and not the recital of what another, (*e. g.*, the Scripture in the present case) affirms. The same thing is true, and is important to bear in mind in all the subsequent cases. What he affirms in the present and every other case is on the ground of what the Scripture or other sources testify of the persons. That testimony is not directly, that Abel or the others had faith, much less that they had faith in precisely the way described ver. 1. But in view of what is testified, *the Apostle* says it was **by faith** that such things were so in their case.¹ The scriptural facts in Abel's case are: (*a*) he **offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain**. It is not said here in what respect it was better. It *was* better, as the account shows; and the Apostle means to affirm, not that faith made the sacrifice better, but that *by faith* Able offered what was a better sacrifice. (*b*) "God bore witness to him in respect to his gifts that he was righteous." The fact is plainly signified Gen. iv. 4, though the manner of it is not. We see from μαρτυρέω, used here both actively and passively in what sense it is meant. God is the active subject in both, and gives testimony of something (here righteousness) concerning a person (Abel), the testimony being directed to others (in this case Cain, in the first instance), that they might know how God regarded the person to whom he bore witness. It is a mistake to suppose² the Apostle refers to how Jesus bore witness to "righteous Abel" (Matt. xxiii. 25). Nor does he mean the testimony as a matter of record, which is testimony to us. He means the testimony as it was given on the spot. This he says Able obtained **by faith** (δι' ἰσ). When he says the testimony was "that he was righteous," that, as the: **by faith**, is the Apostle's

¹ So von Hof.

² With Owen, etc.

affirmation, not the Scripture's. And the statement shows that the thought of x. 38, "the righteous one by faith," is retained in the present representations. (c) **And being dead he yet speaks.** This is the most extraordinary of all the present statements. The reference is to the record Gen. iv. 10 "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The present tense: **speaks** is the present of that narrative and graphic like the present participial *μαρτυροῦντος* preceding. The meaning is that Abel speaks (spoke) to God, though dead,¹ and not that he speaks and has spoken to succeeding generations in the Scripture. This, the Apostle says again, Abel did by faith (*δι' ἀντίσης*). The meaning is that, dead as well as alive, Abel was an object of concern to God and in communion with him.² Faith, the assurance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen, could bring that about! What an illustration of the Apostle's saying: "we are of faith unto the gaining of the soul; and the righteous one by faith shall live!"³

Ver. 5. **By faith Enoch was translated so as not to see death, and he was not found because God translated him. For before the translation he has been borne witness to that he had been well-pleasing to God.** Comp. Gen. v. 10, 21-24.

In the foregoing illustration, faith made Abel do something. In this, the faith of Enoch makes God do something. The difference is more in appearance than in substance. Chrysostom bridges the hiatus in thought thus: "How was Enoch translated by faith? because his pleasing God was the cause of the translation, and faith was the cause of his pleasing God." The *πρὸ τῆς μετὰ θάνατον* is to be taken locally, with reference to the order of the Scripture record as representing the order of the facts. Before it is recorded that he was translated, it is recorded that he pleased God. To this the Author refers as to testimony according to the norm of ver. 2. Hence the perfect tense. **Well-pleasing to God** is according to the LXX, that so renders the Hebrew: "walked with God," Gen. v. 24. "It is, however, plain that the Apostle knew the original text, from his adding:

Ver. 6. **Now without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing**

¹ Calvin, Del., von Hof, Lün.

² Comp. Calvin.

³ x. 39, 38.

[unto him], for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.

“Both *προσέρχασθαι τῷ θεῷ* and *ἐκζητεῖν αὐτόν* are occasioned by the Hebrew: ‘he walked with God,’ and not by the LXX rendering: ‘he was well-pleasing unto God.’”¹ That he is; the present text is “the only place where the existence of God is thus expressed!”² The coming to God meant here, is that approach or drawing near for worship that has frequent mention in our epistle. Enoch’s walking with God, by which he was well-pleasing unto God, was by faith that showed itself in the manner here described.

Ver. 7 a. **By faith Noah having been warned [of God], fearing about the things not yet seen, prepared an ark for salvation of his house.** Comp. Gen. vi. 13 sqq.

The translation just given³ needs no defense on grammatical grounds.⁴ The logical reasons in favor of it outweigh the rythmical in favor of connecting: **about things not yet seen, with having been warned.** The word rendered **warned** has a pregnant religious sense, involving the notion of God as the one who warns, like the word “revealed,” which involves the notion of God as the revealer. Thus *χρηματισθεὶς* is appropriately rendered: **being warned of God.** The article in *περὶ τῶν μεδεῶν βλεπομένων* has no force when this phrase is connected with *χρηματ.*; consequently, it is ignored where that construction is used.⁵ But construed with *ἐλάλει*, it has its definite force as relating to the substance of the warning.

The fitness of this reference to Noah, to the subject of faith, as described ver. 1, is quite obvious. In the present words his assurance of the coming, yet unseen things, was evidenced by his fearing them, and this made him build the ark as he was directed. This was by faith, says the Apostle.

To this he adds a double comment, precisely in the fashion of ver. 4, when he speaks of Abel. In this he notes two consequences of Noah’s faith. For *δι’ ἧς* relates to faith and not to the ark.

¹ von Hof.

² de Wette.

³ So von Hof.

⁴ Com. Alford, who rejects it; and versions of 1611, 1881.

⁵ Versions of 1611, 1881.

Ver. 7 *b*. **By which he condemned the world, and of the righteousness which is according to faith he became heir.**

As the consequence of Noah's faith, the condemning of the world (*κόσμον*) was in the fact that he believed what was announced to him, while others to whom he proclaimed it did not believe.¹ The additional consequence, viz., **he became heir**, etc., is the Apostle's comment on the familiar fact that Noah is the first in Scripture to be called "righteous" (Gen. vi. 9).² In: **heir of the righteousness** he chooses an expression that denotes actual and inalienable possession, and, at the same time, that what is possessed comes not out of himself, but from God. Saying: the **righteousness** was: **according to faith**, expresses that one's being what God would have him is found only where faith is. In the case of Noah it came about by nothing else than by his regarding what God revealed, to be just what it was said to be.³ Thus it is expressly interpreted that, not by works, but by faith Noah was the righteous man he is called in Scripture. Also this notion of righteousness is mentioned as one familiar to the readers, which sounds much like the Apostle Paul.

Ver. 8. **By faith Abraham being called, obeyed to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out not knowing where he goes.** See Gen. xii. 1, 4; Acts vii. 2, 3.

This description is evidently composed with the design of giving in relief the traits of Abraham's call and obedience that justify the Apostle in ascribing Abraham's conduct to faith. Only an assurance of something hoped for, and a demonstration of what was not seen could explain Abraham's obedience to such a call. Abraham's faith was that assurance and demonstration.

Ver. 9. **By faith, having taken up his abode in tents in a land of promise as a foreign [land], he was a sojourner, with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise.**

Παραιτέω is never used with *εἰς*, whereas *κατοικέω* is used both with *εἰς* and *ἐν*. This usage constrains us to connect *παρώχῃσιν* with *μετὰ Ἰσ.*, and to construe *εἰς γῆν*, etc., with *κατοικήσας*, as a parenthesis.⁴ It gives excellent sense. Again it is evident that

¹ von Hof.; comp. 2 Peter ii. 5; John iii. 18.

³ von Hof.; Riehm, p. 731 sq.

² Comp. Alford.

⁴ So von Hof.

there is here a studied representation of the facts, so as to make it obvious at a glance that the Apostle is correct in saying, this was by faith. "So it is said that he took up his abode in tents, thus as a wanderer in the land of promise, as in a land that was not his but another's, and accordingly lived as a stranger with Isaac and Jacob."¹

Ver. 10. **For he waited for the city, which hath its foundations, whose [i. e., the city's] builder and maker is God.**

This verse explains the phenomenal manner of life just described, and shows how it was an example of faith as defined ver. 1, by designating what was the unseen and hoped for thing, on the assurance of which Abraham lived. **He waited for the city.** On ἐκδέχομαι see x. 12. In τοὺς θεμελίους = **its foundations**,² the article has the force of a possessive pronoun. It is usual to understand by **city** here the "heavenly Jerusalem" mentioned xii. 22.³ It is quite consistent with the Author's style to represent New Testament notions under Old Testament forms, of which we have had example iii. 7, iv. 11; and also to represent the essence of an Old Testament act in its New Testament form, of which we have example vers. 25, 26. No scruples about its being "unhistorical,"⁴ then, need debar us from concurring in the interpretation just mentioned. But as there is a plain meaning expressed by the words of our verse that is perfectly "historical," i. e., suited to the times of Abraham, *that* must claim precedence. Grotius, and later Ebrard, understand our verse to mean, that Abraham waited for God to establish a state in the promised land wherein the present sojourning in tents would be exchanged for dwelling in a city. In this view, as we have now expressed it generally, without the amplifications of Grotius, and particularly of Ebrard, we concur. The expression: **whose builder and maker is God**, denotes that the city is all of God and of no other.⁵ The Author says: **the city**; and the definite article is due to the definite notion of a city presented in that predicate, viz., the one wholly of God's making. The Patriarch waited for such a city, with **its foundations**, this trait being added

¹ von Hof.² von Hof.; comp. Kühner Gram. II., p. 515.³ Del., von Hof., Alford, Davidson. etc.⁴ Ebrard.⁵ Grotius.

to mark the contrast with the tent habitations that were without these. He waited for **the city** there, in that land where he and Isaac and Jacob lived in such different fashion. He waited for God to bring it about. It is *faith*, and not the object of faith, or contents of what was believed, that is the important matter in all these representations. The objects differ with the examples. To be established in a city-habitation in Canaan was as much a matter of faith to the Patriarchs, as the waiting for the heavenly Jerusalem is for us. Nor can we distinguish in respect to the degree of faith in the two cases.

It does not seem obvious at a glance, why the Apostle should use the word **city** to express the notion of actually possessing the land of Canaan, and settlement there in permanent habitations. But this is owing to the other and less natural interpretation, having diverted attention from the one we are commending, and not from anything far-fetched in the latter. When (Gen. xxii. 17) the Angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham, after the trial of offering Isaac, the covenant with Abraham was renewed in terms more explicit than ever before.¹ On that occasion it was significantly said: "And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." This is rendered by the LXX: "And thy seed shall inherit the cities of their adversaries" (τὰς πόλεις τῶν ὑπεναντίων). When we compare with this the words of Ps. cvii. 4, 7, 36, "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in" (ὁδὸν πόλεως κατοικητηρίου οὐκ εὑρον), we see that a Scriptural mode of conception, and of actual expression, in reference to the possession and settlement of Canaan, are reflected in the language of our verse, even to πόλις in the singular. This makes the interpretation we commend the obvious one, while that which supposes the Apostle to refer to the heavenly Jerusalem is far-fetched.

Ver. 11. **By faith even Sarah herself received power for foundation of a seed, and beyond the time of age, since she counted him faithful who had promised.**

There seems no reason why the *καί* should merely conjoin the present example to the one preceding, while all the other instances

¹ Comp. above on vi. 13-15.

are without it.¹ It is therefore, proper to translate it: **even**. The *εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος* is an unusual expression, and in a literal translation: "for deposition of seed,"² is ambiguous. It is agreeable both to the common use of *καταβολή* and to Scriptural ideas, to understand the meaning to be: "founding a posterity,"³ and such we suppose is the Apostle's meaning.

The sacred record,⁴ on whose good report of the ancients (ver. 2) the Apostle founds his statements, represents the ancestress of the chosen seed chiefly in moments of little faith. This is not to be interpreted by us that she had no faith. It was not so by her posterity, as the verse before us shows.⁵ It is, however, a reason for the Apostle saying: **even Sarah herself**,⁶ as if, in citing Sarah as an example of faith, he were doing something that might be unexpected. We may, recalling the unusual expression of iv. 2, *μὴ συνεκερασμένους τῇ πίστει*, regard Sarah as an example of the contrary, viz., as one combined by faith with Abraham who heard the word of promise with profit; and so that word profited her also. She accounted him faithful that had promised. Comp. x. 23.

Ver. 12. **Wherefore, also, there were born⁷ of one, and that effete, as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore, innumerable.**

From one means Abraham. His being deadened with respect to pro-creation is emphasized in the same way, and by using the same word Rom. iv. 19; in which we see a proof that Paul writes here. The consequences of faith in his case with Sarah combined are expressed in the terms of the original promise (Gen. xiii. 16; xv. 5; xxii. 17 sqq.), thus giving the full significance to the foregoing expression: "she counted him faithful who had promised."

"The Author has pointed out a threefold faith (vers. 8-12) in the history of Abraham and Sarah; faith that made them obedient to an incomprehensible call of God; faith that made them

¹ The *καί* of ver. 20, Lach, Alford, W. and H. is doubtful.

² See Alford. ³ So Lün., von Hof., etc. ⁴ Comp. Gen. viii. 12, 15.

⁵ Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 6. ⁶ With Lün., against Del., Alford, von Hof.

⁷ *Ἐγεννήθησαν*, Recept, Tisch., W. and H.

content with a present state of thing not in accordance with the promise; faith which on the word of God accepted as certain what was otherwise impossible. Now, in vers. 13-16, he displays faith that consoled itself by a promised future beyond death. He affirms of all these named, of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Jacob:”¹

Ver. 13. **According to faith all these died not receiving the promises, but seeing and greeting (aorist participle) them afar off, and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners upon the land.**

The Apostle does not say: by faith (πίστει), but **according to faith** (κατά); meaning, as consisted with their relation to the promises, so they died. The participles in the aorist do not describe their attitude to the promises merely in the act of dying, but as they lived and saw the end of life approach. By **the promises**, in the plural, is meant what God promised, as just referred to, ver., 11, 12, but regarded as repeated to the three Patriarchs. The totality of it comprehended the possession of Canaan, settled by a countless posterity, and destined to bless all the nations of the earth with the blessing of Abraham. They did not receive (χομισάμενοι)² what was promised in the sense of actual fulfillment.³ They knew that fulfillment was distant, but they regarded it as sure. They even saw the promises, by faith of course (ver. 1), and were as sailors that see the mountain tops of their distant native land as they approach its shore, and greet the lowlands and homes that are still invisible as if they saw them. *Quum procul obscuros colles humilemque viderem Italiam . . . Italiam laeto socii clamore salutant.*⁴

In that state **they confessed** that they were **strangers and sojourners**, by which is expressed that they understood their situation with all its prospects, and, so far from being ignorant of it, acquiesced in it and freely declared it to others.⁵ Their existence was not a continual disappointment of hope deferred. It deserves to be noted that *παρεπίδημοι* means **sojourners**, that is

¹ von Hof.

³ Comp. on vi. 12, 14.

⁵ Comp. Gen. xxiii. 4; xxviii. 4; xlvii. 9.

² Tisch, Treg., W. and H.

⁴ Virg. Aen. iii. 522.

“pilgrims” in the old sense of that word, as the derivative and equivalent of *peregrinus*. The notion of one travelling through a land to a destination, such as a sacred place of worship or a distant home, is no part of the meaning of the word. It is the more important to notice this, as it is not uncommon to take this meaning and carry it to the interpretation of the next verse, which speaks of seeking a country. It is not necessary to understand ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς any more universally than γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ver. 9. It is called by Isaac speaking to Jacob: “the land wherein thou art a stranger” (τῇν γῆν τῆς παροικησέως σου).¹ There, in the land where they were actually strangers, they confessed what they were. For the antithesis: “heavenly country,” ver. 16, for which this prepares, this meaning of **the land** is enough, even if: “heavenly country” mean, in heaven itself.

In proof of the intelligent acquiescence in their condition that he has ascribed to the Patriarchs, the Apostle adds:

Ver. 14. For they that say such things make manifest that they seek [their] native land.

This is not a direct inference from their calling themselves strangers and sojourners in the land, or interpretation of those words, as is commonly thought. It would be too much to infer from that alone. It would not, indeed, if they confessed themselves “pilgrims” in the present meaning of that word. Where are you going? is the first question asked of one that calls himself a pilgrim. But a Gypsy, who is no pilgrim, yet is a stranger and sojourner, is not so questioned. Thus, as we have intimated above, the translation “pilgrims” is misleading, and is therefore to be avoided. By presenting too immediate a premise, not warranted by the word so translated, it obscures to the reader the actual reasoning of the Author. The present verse is an affirmation, and not an inference from what the Patriarchs confessed. The **For** does not introduce an inference, but a reason in support of a foregoing statement, viz., that those who “confessed,” etc., **saw and greeted the promise afar off**. By this **they made manifest** (most fitting expression in such a connection) that they sought their native land. But the Author expresses himself in the

¹ Gen. xxviii. 4, LXX.

present tense, graphically, as contemplating the Patriarchs, with their expectant manner and pious confession, as they are there for every reader of scripture. Thus he directs our attention to them with a view to the inference he is about to make (νῦν δέ ver. 16). For the statement of our verse has not that importance in itself, as something emphatic said of the Patriarchs, and the significant inference from what precedes. The Apostle in this verse puts two facts together; (a) they seek a country of their own, (b) they confess they are sojourners in the land where they are. From this he proceeds:

Ver. 15. **And if indeed they were thinking** (imperf.) **of that from which they went out, they had** (εἶχον = were having all the time, imperf.) **opportunity to return.**

This is mentioned as a possible inference from the double fact, mentioned in the foregoing verse, of what they say and seek, which is the alternative of that the Apostle means to introduce. It is mentioned to show that it is inadmissible. He then presses the other:

Ver. 16. **But now they desire a better [country] that is a heavenly.**

The expression returns to the present tense of the representation ver. 14. It interprets by an inference what that picture of the Patriarchs in the scripture means. **Better**, means better country. But to the question: better than what? we suppose the answer may be: better than Terah's country from which they came; or better than the land in which they sojourned. It was really something better than any existing land. For even Canaan, merely as a land, was not what they looked for; but Canaan, as it would be when God would give it, and all that He promised in the same connection. And thus the Apostle adds, by way of interpretation: **that is a heavenly.**

For the most part expositors interpret the Apostle to mean that the Patriarchs not only looked beyond their present life for the fulfillment to them of the promise, but that they contemplated heaven locally as a country, superterrestrial and better than this earth; much in the material way that is common to Christian sentiment and language now. We have remarked,

at ver. 10, that it is quite consistent with the Apostle's style to express Old Testament faith under a New Testament form. But the above interpretation of this text would not make it an instance of expressing the faith of the Patriarchs in a New Testament form, but in a post-New Testament form derived from the present epistle, and particularly from our verses 10, 16, combined with Rev. xxi. xxii. In remarking on this, the distinction should be noted, that we have not before us the question, whether the Patriarchs had a knowledge of a future state. *That* they certainly had as the following clause of our verse shows; and it justified the expression: "in Abraham's bosom,"¹ as the form of conceiving of it for the spiritual seed of Abraham. But we are considering whether the present scripture represents that they looked for heaven as a country, or so expresses their hopes in New Testament form. Now the New Testament representation of the future heaven of saints is: "to be with Christ,"² until he shall come again and complete the glorious work of redemption by the resurrection of the saints. Then heaven will be a glorious kingdom, which will be delivered to the Father.³ We have, also, the representation of an everlasting inheritance.⁴ The vision of the New Jerusalem, also called the Lamb's wife, in Rev. xxi. xxii., is unique. It is the attendant of a new heaven and a new earth. It descends out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. This in no wise presents the conception of a country. It is a ravishing representation of the glory, light, holiness and bliss of the redeemed estate. It is not the same notion as that of xii. 22 of our epistle. That of Rev. xxi. xxii. is expressed in materials making the fabric of the city. That of our xii. 22 is composed of the saints with no mention of architectural features. The uniqueness of the representation in Revelation makes it inconceivable that our Author could impute to the Patriarchs that form of conceiving heavenly existence, or even that he could use that form as expressing what was the essence of their heavenly hope.

¹ Luke xvi. 22.² John xiv. 1 sqq., 2 Cor. v. 6-9; Phil. i. 23.³ 1 Cor. xv. 20-28.⁴ 1 Pet. i. 4.

We repeat, then, that the interpretation that represents the Apostle to say in our verse that the Patriarchs looked for a country to be realized to them in heaven, where God is, as distinguished from earth, is to suppose he expresses their hope in a post-New Testament form, which is chiefly derived from our verses 10, 16 themselves, combined with Rev. xxii.

The difficulty of this interpretation is felt by those who give it. Thus Delitzsch says: "It must be confessed that we nowhere read of the patriarchs, that they expressed a conscious desire for a home in heaven. The nearest approach to anything of the kind is in Jacob's vision of the angel-ladder, and his wondering exclamation; 'this is the gate of heaven' (Gen. xxviii. 17). But even there no desire is expressed for an entrance into the heavenly land, but the promise is renewed of future possession of the earthly Canaan." This is true, and nothing could be more to the point. Holding to the interpretation in spite of it, seems like forsaking exegesis and resorting to something else. Perhaps the word: "heavenly" (*ἐπουράνιος*) is thought to compel such an interpretation. But that word does not of itself mean "in heaven," locally where God is. Paul speaks of: "the spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly places" (*ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*) Eph. vi. 12; Comp. Rev. xii. 7, 8. In John iii. 12 *ἐπουράνια* is opposed to *ἐπίγεια*, in the sense of what is revealed and what is not yet revealed, or what has come from heaven to earth and what is yet to come from heaven. "The word *ἐπουράνιος* notes not only that which is in heaven, but that which is from heaven, *de coelo*, as it is said, ver. 10, for he looked for the city, whose builder is God."¹ The reference to Jacob's vision at Bethel is precisely to the point. There the heavenly country was promised him, *i. e.*, a country revealed from heaven and to be secured to him from the same source and in the terms of the promise then given. For that he looked, as Isaac and Abraham before him. It was not the mere land of Canaan. It was to be the land of Canaan made a heavenly country as that spot where he had the vision was made "the gate of heaven." "When the Apostle calls the promised land directly a heavenly country, he

¹ Jos. Mede Works, fol. 1672, p. 801.

is justified in doing so as surely as their desire did not aim at possessing it as it now was the property of the Canaanites, but was directed toward their race being the people of God in this land, with whom God would dwell, and from whom the blessing of God would extend to all the generations of the earth; thus that God from heaven would make this land for their race a fatherland in a wholly different sense from which that happens in earthly fashion.”¹

It is urged,² that long after the chosen people occupied the promised land, true faith expressed itself by the same confession; *e. g.*, the Psalmist: “I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.”³ The inference is that the Patriarchs meant this just as David. But let it be remembered, as has just been shown, that the Apostle does not interpret this confession to mean that those who made it looked for a country in heaven above. Without such an inspired interpretation no one is entitled to make it. The Patriarchs and Moses and David may have confessed themselves strangers and sojourners in the same sense. But it cannot be said of David as of the Patriarchs: he that says such things manifests that he seeks a native country. David and Asaph manifested that they expected to be received up to glory and be at the right hand of God where there are pleasures forever more. But these are different conceptions.⁴

Ver. 16 b. **Wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God, for he prepared for them a city.**

Because of such faith in the Patriarchs, whereby they looked and lived for the promises in the way just described, God rewarded them as stated in this verse. **Not ashamed**⁵ expresses by *meiosis*, that God did with divine pleasure what is affirmed, yet expresses the condescension of the act. The Apostle refers to the particular occasion recorded Ex. iii. 6, when God said to Moses, with great solemnity: “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” The same text is made memorable by the use the Lord Jesus made of it.⁶ The Apostle’s

¹ von Hof. ² McLean. ³ Ps. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19; 1 Chr. xxix. 15.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 24; xvi. 11.

⁵ Comp. ii. 11.

⁶ Matt. xxii. 32; Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37.

appeal to it is hardly less remarkable. For he, too, treats it as representing what God did to the Patriarchs themselves. **He was not ashamed of them**, expresses no such inferior notion as that God held their names in honor as departed worthies, as men call themselves or their children by great names of the past. God owned and honored them as still in being to receive the consolation and joy of the recognition. As Jesus said: "He is not a God of the dead but of the living," so the Apostle means: He is not rewarding dead men, but living men, when He openly shows He is not ashamed of them. The expression of this honor is in **calling himself their God**. To this the Apostle adds: **For he prepared for them a city**. The **For** conjoins this to the other as the proof of God's rewarding them; the material and practical proof we may say, without which his calling himself their God would be without meaning. The meaning we have ascertained for vers. 10, 15, 16 *a*, involves our interpreting the meaning of the present clause to be, that God gave them Canaan according to promise. And, agreeably to the foregoing references to that as their expectation, it is here expressed: **he prepared for them a city**. For the propriety of the expression, see under ver. 10. With this interpretation we find the *ἡτοίμασεν*, aorist, exactly the proper tense to use, and the word itself: **he prepared**, just what the reference requires. For the appeal is to an historical transaction when God so called Himself, and when he instituted the measures that initiated the occupation of Canaan, in fulfillment of the promise to the Patriarchs. It ought to deter expositors from interpreting our clause as expressing that God prepared their city in heaven with Himself, when to do so, they must render this aorist by the pluperfect,¹ or, while seeming to do justice to the aorist, they make a meaning that could only be properly expressed by the perfect.²

The remarkable thing about the Apostle's present statement is, that what God did, in giving possession of Canaan, is here represented as done to the Patriarchs themselves. We might expect it to be said: he prepared a city for their posterity. But it reads: **he prepared for them a city**. Thus, as in the case of Abel above,

¹ Del.² Alford. Versions of 1611, 1881.

the Apostle represents that faith effected a relation and communion with God that was not and is not interrupted by death.

The Apostle having pointed to the three Patriarchs and Sarah as examples of faith in some respects wherein they were all alike, proceeds to mention a number of individuals that illustrated faith in respects peculiar to each. In this category some of those already mentioned come in for a second notice.

Ver. 17. **By faith Abraham hath offered up Isaac.** Being tried, he was offering even his only begotten, he that accepted the promises, 18. to whom it was said that in Isaac thy seed shall be called, 19. considering that God (was) able to raise from the dead; whence also he received him in a parable.

In construing ver. 17, we follow von Hofmann in making *πειραζόμενος* connect with the words following, and taking what precedes as a distinct sentence. In the first sentence the emphasis is on the predicate *προσενήνοχεν*, and not on the subject Abraham. This appears from the position of the verb. Notice the contrary in vers. 5, 7, 8, 11. In ver. 8 it reads: *πίστει καλούμενος Ἀβ. ὑπήκουσεν*; here it does not read *πίστει πειραζόμενος Ἀβ. προσενήνοχεν*. This difference shows that *πειραζ.* is not to be taken with the words preceding, but with those following it. With this construction, the perfect *προσενήνοχεν* has no awkwardness. It is, like the present tenses of ver. 14, spoken from the record of Scripture. Contemplating that, it is natural to refer to the confession Abraham was wont to make, by: he says; and of single transactions, to say: he has offered Isaac. On the other hand *πειραζόμε.*, as the imperf. participle, connects better with the following verb in the imperfect. Thus, it begins another sentence that is obviously intended to particularize the details of the transaction referred to, so as to make evident, and enhance the faith then displayed. Of these, the **being tried** was itself one, and does not merely express the occasion of his offering Isaac.

(1). The transaction was a trial devised by God, and intended to put Abraham to the test, which test he stood. (2). He did not hesitate to give up even (*καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ*) him who was his only begotten son, who was such in the sense in which he is so called, Gen. xxii. 2, 16. (3). He that did this was the one that had not merely

received the promises,¹ but had with faith and joy accepted and adopted them, and to whom God had said: "In Isaac thy seed shall be called," by which is noted, that all that was promised had been attached to Isaac as the channel of fulfillment, so that it appeared, that by sacrificing Isaac he made the realization of the promise impossible, which conflict between command and promise he might suppose would justify him in leaving the command unfulfilled. (4). And lastly, the thought is mentioned that enabled him to bear the test to which he was put. He considered God able even to raise from the dead. And in justification of this conviction the Apostle adds: **from whence also he received him in [the manner of] a parable.**²

Abraham held fast to the assurance that what was promised would be fulfilled, though the only visible link, and indeed the sole condition or means of the realization of what he hoped for was destroyed. Thus he rested on the bare word of God. The faith of God's people has often been tried in a similar way. But Abraham's faith was put to the test that no other believer has ever experienced. Other believers have seen every visible sign and condition of the fulfillment of their hopes disappear, and themselves left without these to trust to the bare word of God. But God was the agent in destroying these things, or others whom God suffered—God who destroys the hope of man. But Abraham was commanded to be himself the destroyer of the very pledge that God had given as the first link in the fulfillment of his hopes. Did God ever require that of another believer? Well did he, that stood that test, and *so believed the word* of God, earn the position and title of "the father of all them that believe."³ God never required the like performance of another. What Abraham was caused to do was reserved for a higher use than human imitation. God was giving an example for Himself. For on that same spot in time to come God would give up to sacrifice His only begotten Son, and not spare Him, or Himself. His Son would really suffer death and really rise from the dead.

¹ Comp. above on ver. 13.

² The foregoing (1)-(4) from von Hof.

³ Rom. iv. 11.

To this the Apostle points when he adds: **Whence,¹ also he received him in a parable.** By ἐν παραβολῇ is not meant: "figuratively speaking;" which meaning English readers seem often to take from the rendering: "in a figure," of the version of 1611. As for other interpretations of the present clause, one may consult the extended account in Alford. The Author assumes in his readers familiarity with the transaction. It ended by the ram being offered instead of Isaac. The death of another that God provided was substituted for Isaac's death, and accepted by God. That constituted the parable.² The interpretation was given in time, in the fullness of time, when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons.³

Ver. 20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.

The brevity of this reference shows how much the Author counts on the familiarity of his readers with the sacred facts. The record itself is so full and dramatic (Gen. xxvii.) that nothing is needed to enhance it as an example. Here we are pointed to what Isaac did concerning "things to come," *i. e.*, things not seen, consistently with the Author's subject (ver. 1). By: **even concerning things to come** (καὶ περὶ μελλ.) a contrast is implied between the temporal things and actual property with which Isaac would of course bless his sons, and the future good that he prophetically conferred on them. These: **things to come** Isaac imparted to his sons with all the manner of one "dividing to his sons the portion of goods falling to each." How these men of faith lived in the sphere of things hoped for, yet invisible! As the Apostle mentions both Jacob and Esau, it is plain that he cites the faith of Isaac merely as faith in respect to what was future and unseen, and not as that species of faith, that we call

¹ It is difficult to determine the meaning of ὅθεν. If, because in every other instance of its use in this epistle it means: "on which account," we must so take it here, then the receiving from the dead is represented as the reward of such faith; in either case, receiving from the dead is meant. Such being the fact, it is reasonable to take ὅθεν as referring to νεκρῶν.

² So Del., Ebrard, von Hof., Alford.

³ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

evangelical faith, that has respect particularly to the promise of salvation. The blessing of Esau, though it concerned things to come, had no concern with the promise of salvation to men. That was the blessing he lost. What has just been noted is important to understanding the Author's aim in appealing to these example of faith. It shows how needless is the perplexity that is often felt when he comes to cite Rahab and Samson as illustrations of faith.

Jacob is cited next, in two illustrations that he gave of faith when about to die, and which the Apostle mentions in an order the reverse of their occurrence as recorded. See Gen. xlviii. 1-22; xlvii. 29-31.

Ver. 21. By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped on the top of his staff.

The point of the first incident may easily be mistaken. It has nothing to do with Ephraim being preferred to Manasseh in analogy to the case of Jacob and Esau.¹ Nor is it that Jacob, as well as Isaac, blessed his sons, which notion has led readers to suppose the reference to be to the record of Gen. xlix. as well as to xlviii. In the catalogue of worthies, beginning with ver. 17, our Author evidently varies his illustration with each instance. In ver. 8-16 he as evidently groups his illustrations as examples of the same kind.

The peculiarity of the present example appears, first, in selecting the instance of Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph, although Jacob also blessed all his sons. It signalizes the faith of Jacob, as it is the wonder of this transaction, that he, though poor, and the pensioner of his son Joseph in temporal things, should feel that he was the greater, and Joseph the less; that he had a blessing to impart that was greater than anything Joseph could do for his sons, great as he was in Egypt, in Egypt's greatest epoch; that it was an honor done to those sons to incorporate them, by adoption, into the tribes of Israel, instead of leaving them to find their portion in the land of Egypt.

The peculiarity of the present example appears, second and expressly, in the saying: **each of the sons of Joseph. Each is**

¹ Against Del., Lün., Alford.

emphatic. The unseen thing of the future prophetically dispensed to Joseph's sons, was that, not Joseph alone, but each of his sons was to become the patriarchal ancestor of a tribe in Israel, just as Reuben and Simeon, etc.¹

The second illustration is obscure. In the original account this incident has no connection with the one just given. Nor does the Apostle intend any combination of them here. The present is a second and independent illustration from Jacob. The whole incident is referred to. In view of death Jacob took an oath of Joseph that the latter would bury him in Canaan with Abraham. When Joseph had given the pledge, then **Jacob worshipped upon the head of his staff.** The versions of 1611, 1881 quite needlessly supply "leaning." See in Alford an account of the interpretation of these words, where especial notice is taken of its use as a proof text for image worship. The Hebrew word **נָטָה** vocalized one way means "a bed;" in another way means "a staff." The LXX. took it in the latter sense, and the Apostle quotes from them. It is obvious that the worshipping is the important notion, and the gesture attending it is indifferent. The spirit of that act is revealed in the circumstances. It was grateful homage to God, in the assurance that his body was to rest in hope in the land of promise, among his own people and the people of God. This signalized in Jacob an assurance concerning many things unseen and to be, of which there was no outward demonstration. The demonstration was in himself, viz., his faith.

Ver. 22. By faith Joseph, when ending life, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.

His assurance that the Exodus would take place, though several generations removed, is signalized by the injunction to transport his body to Canaan when the movement was made (Gen. l. 24-26). That body of Joseph, embalmed and kept among the living, Egyptian fashion, remained for many generations a mute testimony to the faith of Joseph, and a reminder of the promise of God to bring the posterity of Abraham back to Canaan.

¹ So von Hof.

Ver. 23. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw the child was comely, and they did not fear the command of the King.

Comp. Exod. ii. 1-3. What signalized the faith of Moses' parents was their concealing the child and not fearing the King's command to destroy the male children; which is one fact described in its double aspect. Guided by ver. 1 and διότι ἐζήδον, we may understand their seeing (comp. ἰδόντες ver. 13) to be part of the faith to which the Apostle directs attention. The comeliness (ἀσπεῖδον) of the child was something they were assured of, or saw by faith. The Greek word, adopted from the LXX, means not so much physical beauty, as "refined," "comely," betokening an elevated sphere of action. The Hebrew word טוב = "good," suggests the thought: good for what? What they saw in their child was a fitness for something great. Baby features could not express that. It is foolish to suppose the Apostle may refer here to that conviction of the superior beauty of their babe, that was equally the conviction of nine-tenths of the Israelitish parents, as it is of such a proportion of parents still. How they saw what they did, does not plainly appear. But we may lean on a tradition which we may assume was well known to the Apostle and his readers, and may suppose to be sanctioned by our verse. Josephus¹ shows that it was common in his time to ascribe this to a direct revelation given to Amram, the father of Moses. There is nothing unreasonable in this idea, though we must discredit much in Josephus' fulsome account of it. Such a family revelation would help to explain the premature, and ill-advised attempt of Moses to be a deliverer of his people,² that is recorded without explanation of how he was led to suppose he might be accepted as such. A reference to the words of Stephen, Acts vii. 20, encourages the view just given. The ἀσπεῖδον of the LXX, Exod. ii. 2, is by him interpreted as, ἀσπεῖδος τῷ θεῷ = "fine to God." This is no common phrase, nor so common a combination of words,³ as to be easily made a superlative.⁴ It only amounts to a superlative

¹ Antiq. 2, 9.

² Exod. ii. 11 sqq.; Acts vii. 25.

³ Comp. 2 Cor. x. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 14.

⁴ Comp. Winer, Gram., p. 248; against Meyer *in loc.*

because of the quality so described, which is unique rather than superlative, or even intense. For no comparison is implied. The expression seems to denote a fineness or goodness to God that was to be a goodness for his people; but in what way, was reserved for time to show. Thus it was something hoped for and unseen, and the parents of Moses saw it only by faith.

Moses himself is cited next. He is too great a figure and too full of action to afford only one illustration of faith. The Apostle gives three (vers. 24-29).

Ver. 24. **By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, ^{25.} choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, ^{26.} accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the recompense of reward.**

Here the Apostle expresses the ruling motive of Moses' conduct in a Christian form. It is the Apostle's interpretation of the acts represented in the foregoing statements, giving the spirit of those acts. He has even blended the old and the Christian form of expression in: **the pleasure of sin for a season**, by which he refers to the temptation Moses had to choose his portion in Egypt. The advantages of that choice would have been sinful pleasure, and they would have been only temporary. It is implied, on the contrary, that what he did choose had pleasure enduring to eternity. In ver. 26 the Apostle assumes, that choosing to be identified with the people of God as Moses did, and to suffer evil with them, was to do in Old Testament fashion what one does when he bears **the reproach of Christ**.¹ The latter is imputed to Moses in so large and free a measure that he accounted such reproach more precious than the treasures of Egypt to which he might have aspired. The Apostle mentions again "the reproach" of Christ xiii. 13, calling on his readers to bear it with Christ. He means the reproach and persecution proceeding from Jews who rejected Christ. Bearing that reproach required believing Jews to go forth to Christ. To willingly endure that reproach resembles the choice of Moses, or the choice of Moses

¹ So von Hof.

resembles that. *Mutatis mutandis*, the spirit and conduct were the same. The Apostle's expression is simply metaphor, where he might use simile. It is not some typology that we are to detect in this very natural mode of expression. It is more to the point to detect, if possible, what influences the Apostle to choose an expression that identifies the believing conduct of Moses with what he would have his readers show. We may suppose it is suggested primarily, as such things commonly are, in writing and speaking, by the obvious and exceeding fitness of the thought. But in the second place, it is the more to the point and more impressive that this identical conduct should be witnessed in Moses whom the Judaizing spirit at work among the Apostle's readers would set above Christ, confiding in the law of Moses instead of the grace of Christ. But, thirdly, it is still more to the point, that the Apostle views the situation in Moses' time, viz., "the people of God being evil entreated" in Egypt, as affording a parallel to the case of his readers as represented x. 30-38. This moves him to interpret it by representing it in Christian form of expression, so as, in the briefest form, to impress the example on his readers. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were then the adversaries of the people of God; and God purposed then to judge, *i. e.*, vindicate his people by "a great recompense of reward," that would show that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Of this recompense of reward Moses had warning as surely as he knew of the promise of return to Canaan, and by the same means, whatever they were. To this **he looked away**; and this determined him to choose affliction for a season with deliverance afterward, rather than the pleasures of Egypt for a season with destruction afterward. Such we understand to be what is represented in the words before us. Though the interpretation departs from the interpretation generally accepted, which regards: "the recompense of the reward" as a designation for future blessings, viz., the return to Canaan, or life in heaven, it is, nevertheless, the meaning we are compelled to take by what we have found the word *μισθαποδοσία* to mean,¹ and by the whole spirit of x. 30—xi. 27. We have found in x. 39 a preface to chap. xi.;

¹ See at x. 35.

and here Moses is portrayed as "a righteous one by faith, who does not shrink back to destruction, but is of faith to the saving of his life."

Ver. 27. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King; for he endured as seeing the invisible.

It has been regarded as very difficult to determine, whether this refers to the flight into Midian (Ex. ii. 15) or to the Exodus,¹ and on this point expositors have been about equally divided. But against understanding the reference to be to the flight into Midian is the express statement of Exod. ii. 14, 15, that ascribes that flight to fear. It is thought, on the other hand, that were the Exodus meant, it would be mentioned after ver. 28, as the Exodus occurred after the Passover; and our chapter observes a chronological order. It is thought to be a greater and decisive objection, that in the Exodus there was no braving the anger of the king, but it "was made with his consent and at his urgent instance."² The reference is, however, to the Exodus. What is represented here is in accordance with the recorded facts and the chronological order of events. The incident to which the Apostle refers occurred before the Passover, when Moses had his last interview with Pharaoh, and took his final decision and announced it to the king (Ex. x. 28, 29).³ Then the king threatened him in anger, and Moses replied to it in words that intimated his purpose of leaving Egypt. Thus the objection founded on the use of *κατέλιπεν*,⁴ viz., that were the Exodus meant a verb in the plural must be used, as in ver. 29, is inapplicable. For the incident referred to concerned Moses personally, and was his individual act, antecedent to the movement that comprehended the whole people. Our verse expressly states what was the spring of Moses' conduct on that occasion. He saw a greater than King Pharaoh. He saw the unseen King, *i. e.*, God. For "King" is the notion to be supplied after the word **invisible**. And that **seeing** was faith. By *ἐξαρχεῖρησεν*⁵ = **he endured**, is meant "he held out" in his purpose undeterred by what might come of the King's wrath.

¹ See in Alford.

² Alford.

³ Similarly von Hof.

⁴ Alford.

⁵ Used once in the New Testament.

Ver. 28. **By faith he has observed the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, in order that he who was destroying the first born might not touch them.**

The perfect *πεποιηθέν* is to be explained as the perfect in ver. 17.¹ By von Hofmann *τὰ πρωτότοκα* is construed as the object of *ἡγή*. We would then read: "In order that the destroyer might not touch their first born." A most excellent rendering, which has no other objection than its novelty. **Faith**, in the sense of ver. 1, appeared in the assurance and demonstration Moses had, on the word of God, that the destruction of the first born would take place, and that the sprinkling of blood would secure immunity to the first born in Israel. Ex. xii. 1-29.

Ver. 29. **By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land, of which the Egyptians making experiment were swallowed up.** Ex. xiv. 15-31.

Did the Apostle mean to say merely that they crossed the sea on dry ground he would say so just as it had always been said,² that is, without *ὡς* = *as*. Saying: *as on dry ground* has a significance like the other instances of the use of *ὡς* (ver. 9, 27). It is not similitude (ver. 12) that is expressed, but the intimation that they undertook the passage and pursued every step of the way, not along a plain and visible road, but *as if* the road were there, though not visible to their senses.³ That was their faith. **Of which** refers to *sea*.

Ver. 30. **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, having been compassed about for seven days.** Josh. vi.

The Author varies his mode of expression. But it was by the faith of those that compassed the walls that the latter fell.

Ver. 31. **By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with those that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.** Josh. ii. 1-21; vi. 22-25.

Her treatment of the spies sprang from the conviction that Canaan, and so her city, was destined by God to be given to Israel; and she covenanted in advance for her safety. Regarding

¹ von Hof.

² LXX Ex. xiv. 16, 22, 29; comp. Josh. iii. 17; 1 King ii. 8.

³ von Hof.

the fitness of this example of faith in such a catalogue, see above on ver. 20.

Ver. 32. **And what say I more? For time will fail me to narrate of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel and the prophets.**

The Apostle feels that he has particularized enough, and in a summary way indicates how abundant are the examples of faith at his command. He names six persons and then a whole class. These references cover the period included in the Old Testament canonical scriptures. In corroboration, we notice that the ten predicates that follow to ver. 35 *a* mention matters recorded in those scriptures, whereas what follows, in 35 *b*, sqq., may almost all be found in the Apocrypha, and most of them no where else. The ten predicates 33–35 *a* refer to the subjects named in our ver. 32. The predicates 35 *b* refer to others (*ἄλλοι*), and those of 36 sqq. to “still others” (*ἑτέροι*).

We notice that the names of our ver. 32 do not occur in chronological order; yet if taken by couples they do so, only the second mentioned in each case is the first chronologically. This gives color to the conjecture of Lünemann, that the names are intended to be read with an emphasis that would amount to saying: “Gideon as well as Barak; Samuel as well as Jephthah; David as well as Samuel.” But we must expect things of this sort to escape our penetration. See another conjecture in Alford. The predicates (vers. 33–35 *a*) are more numerous than the names in ver. 32, to which they refer. It is observed that the first nine make three triplets, as the names of our ver. 32, make three couples. The first triplet mentions achievements; the second deliverances; the third what they withstood,¹ to which ver. 35 *a* is added. Beyond this it is difficult to detect any correlation of names and predicates. The plural relative subject *οἱ* = **who**, ver. 33, and the following verbs in the plural permit us to suppose that each predicate may apply to two or more of the persons named, while the predicates being more numerous than the subjects named intimates that two or more things are predicated of the same subject. The word **prophets** comprehends a large and

¹ So von Hof.

indefinite list of unnamed worthies. The mention of: "quench the power of fire," (ver. 34), which can refer to nothing known except the friends of Daniel, shows that the predicates of vers. 33-35 *a* are not confined to expressing what is true of the persons named in our ver. 32. The Author roams in thought over all the period comprehended in the canonical scriptures. His mention of names in our verse is only in a representative way.

It is not difficult to find incidents in the Old Testament answering to the predicates of ver. 33-35 *a*. But it is far from easy to be sure that we have identified the references that were in the Apostle's mind when he wrote. The differences among expositors in making these identifications is proof enough of this, seeing that hardly any two will point to just the same things throughout. It is more important to discern in each case the particular matter or substance of faith that the Apostle has in mind; for he says: **through faith** (ver. 33), which applies to all the predicates that follow. This could only be satisfactorily ascertained by identifying the incidents referred to with their attending circumstances.

Ver. 33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms. Instead of *πίστει* as heretofore, we here have *διὰ πίστεως*, which is perhaps chosen because it "suits better the miscellaneous verbs of predication which follow, *e. g.*, *ἔσβεσαν δόναμιν πυρός.*"¹ The meaning, however, is not different. The reference here is to Gideon and David. The former (Jud. vi. 11-vii.) annihilated the power of Midian, and made the name Midian almost disappear from history. Every step to that achievement, but especially attacking the host of Midian with three hundred men, was done through faith that was assurance of things hoped for, yet without visible evidence of their possibility. As for David, all his conquests may be referred to (2 Sam. v. 17-25; viii. 1-14; 1 Chron. xiv.). Regarding his faith, 2 Sam. v. 17 sqq., 1 Chron. xiv. show that it was substantially the same as Gideon's, differing only in the manner in which David was certified of divine help and success. Beside these, the Apostle may have in mind also Barak (Jud. iv.) and Jephthah (Jud. xi. 8 sqq.).

¹ Alford.

Wrought righteousness. The expression signifies a good and blameless life,¹ and does not especially refer to the discharge of judicial functions. Yet in eminent men, who are public functionaries, the latter meaning will necessarily be more prominent. It must be Samuel, the last and greatest of the Judges, that is primarily meant here. In this light he is expressly presented 1 Sam. xii. His whole life was regulated by the assurance of being in the presence of God, and his public acts, as judge, and when he anointed Saul and David to rule, and when he rejected Saul, were displays of that faith that is the assurance of things invisible. But David, too, may be intended; comp. 2 Sam. ix. 14, 15, and indeed all those named ver. 32, and others beside.

Obtained promises. The word for **obtained**, ἐπέτυχον, is the same that is used vi. 15 [where see comment] to say that Abraham "obtained the promise." That was receiving a promise in a way that made it his own, so that it is called: "the promise of Abraham." The present reference is to two or more that obtained promises in that way. The most illustrious instance of the kind in the Old Testament, after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is that recorded 2 Sam. vii., where David obtained the promise that the Messiah should descend from him, according to which: "the mercies of David"² became a name for the covenant promises of salvation to be used like the name: "the promise of Abraham." We may be sure³ that the Apostle refers to that primarily, for the record not only makes the promise very prominent, but also the traits that manifested David's faith, and that it was to his faith that the promise was given as a reward.

As the next instance, viz., stopping the mouth of lions, refers to Daniel, we may suppose that the present statement also relates to that period, and that the Apostle has in mind Jeremiah (xxv. 12; xxix. 10) who obtained the promise of the destruction of Babylon and the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem; and Daniel to whom the same was renewed on the eve of its fulfillment (Dan. ix. 24-27), together with much relating to a remoter future of the manifestation of the Messiah. These promises

¹ Comp. Acts x. 35; James i. 20; LXX., Ps. xv. 2.

² Isa. lv. 3; Acts xiii. 34.

³ Against Alford.

were, in the history of grace, inseparably connected with the names of Jeremiah and Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15), who received them, so that they **obtained** them in the same manner that Abraham and David obtained the promises that were peculiarly their own.

The three predicates now considered finish those that we have classified as *examples of achievements* through faith. Now follow those denoting *deliverances*.

Ver. 34. Stopped the mouths of lions. Here the reference can only be to Daniel (vi. 22), where the very phrase is used. Killing lions, as Samson and David did, would not be referred to as shutting their mouths.¹ The record concerning Daniel makes it evident that he entered the lions' den in the full assurance that no harm would come to him; which was his faith. The following case is precisely of the same sort. **Quenched the power of fire,** can only refer to Daniel's three friends (Dan. iii.). **Escaped the edges of the sword.** This was true of Elijah (1 Kings xix. 10, 14; xviii. 15), and of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 13-18, 31-38).

Then follow three predicates expressive of *endurance* and *with-standing triumphantly in conflict*. **Were made strong from weakness.** Such was the remarkable case of Samson (Judges xvi. 28-30). In the record, precisely the characteristics of faith that this chapter is meant to illustrate appear in the clearest light. This (comp. on ver. 20) should relieve the perplexity of such as stumble at Samson's being brought forward as an example of faith. It is not his whole life that is appealed to. Nor is such the appeal in the case of any one of the persons named. The reference here is to one supreme moment, and that the last of Samson's life, when he did show great faith.

Were made strong in war. David may again be thought of here (comp. Ps. xviii. 34; cxliv. 1). He, like Moses, with religious experiences many and varied enough to make several lives, is great enough to furnish several illustrations. But the case of Asa (2 Chron. xiv.), and that of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.) also fit this description. And likewise Barak (Judges iv. 6). The present trait is not sharply distinct from that which follows,

¹ Against Lindsay, etc.

so that the examples of the one will be the examples of the other.

Put to flight the armies of aliens. Whatever beside might be thought of here, we would suppose it must embrace a reference to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxvii. 14–20, 33–37 ; 2 Kings xix.), whose faith and prayer alone, without array of arms, warded off the impending blow of the Assyrian army, and postponed the captivity of the Jews for another century.

Ver. 35. Women received their dead by a resurrection. This is a predicate by itself. It relates to women exclusively. The most obvious reference is to the widow of Zarephath, to whom Elijah restored her son (1 Kings xvii. 17), and the Shunamite woman to whom Elisha restored her son (2 Kings iv. 18). It is not necessary¹ to understand that the faith of the women is meant here, as the construction of ver. 30 shows. Neither is it necessary to understand that only the faith of the Prophets is meant. Yet we suppose the Apostle refers primarily to the latter, because of the special mention of “the prophets,” ver. 32.

Here ends the list of predicates that refer to the subjects named in a representative way ver. 32. The Apostle proceeds with another list, the transition being marked by *ἄλλοι* = **others**. This list differs from the foregoing in that all the predicates express sufferings endured for the sake of faith. For some of these we may find corresponding facts in the Old Testament. But as those that are most unmistakably identified are found recorded in Maccabees, it is *possible* that all whom the Author has in mind belong to records later than the accounts of the Old Testament. It is not necessary to suppose that he has in mind any characters that are not on record for us. Not attempting to determine whether the following instances *must* all be referred to a period subsequent to the Old Testament records, we may reproduce the citations we find in various commentaries as suitable instances to the point. **Others were put to the rack.** Strong in the faith of a better resurrection to eternal life, they let themselves be racked instead of accepting the proffered deliverance, which would have been deliverance from temporal pain at the cost of that resurrection (2 Macc. vi. 28 sqq.).

¹ Against Alford.

Ver. 36. Then follows the reference to **others still** (ἄλλοι δέ) that faith made strong to endure abuse of **mockings** (1 Macc. ix. 26 ; 2 Macc. vii. 7) and **scourgings, and what was still more** (ἔτι δέ), because an enduring anguish, **bonds and imprisonment** (Jer. xx. 2 ; xxxvii. 15 ; xxxviii. 6). How many kinds of cruel death have such believers died !

Ver. 37. **They were stoned**, like Zechariah (2 Chron. xxiv. 20) ; **they were sawn asunder**, which is said to have happened to Isaiah ;¹ **they were tempted**. Here we encounter the notion,² a very old and common one, that ἐπειράσθησαν must be a copyist's error.³ The reason for this is, first, rhetorical ; it is deemed inconceivable that "so mild a word" should come in the midst of a list so descriptive of the worst torments ; and, second, expositors find no obvious example of temptation endured through faith that is remarkable enough to be classed in such a list as the present. The case, in respect to criticism of the text, is precisely like that of συνκεκρασμένους, iv. 2. MSS. and other authority for settling the text, are all that are needed to establish a disputed word. Nothing but the reasons assigned above can be urged against it. Of these the first is the chief. If one would witness what conjecture can achieve when it tries its best at amending the text, without any other aid than its own resources, he will perhaps find it in the critical treatment of this word. We are content to take the word as it is, and glad that there is no reason for doubting its being genuine, except the fact that it appears in such a combination. Its condemnation on that account may, perhaps, be no wiser than the condemnation of Jesus because he was found in the company of sinners. That condemnation rested on a false assumption, and so may the condemnation of this word. Though temptation to evil, and especially to forsaking God, seems mild, compared with torments, which must be thought of as themselves one form of temptation to forsake God, it might be regarded very differently by a sanctified soul like the Apostle.⁴ Lünemann, with the remark : "if : **were tempted**

¹ Comp. sources given in Alford.

² Del., Alford, von Hof.

³ Opposed by Stuart, Lindsay, Farrar.

⁴ Comp. Farrar, "Life and Work of St. Paul," chap. ix.

be genuine," cites 2 Macc. vii. 24 as an example. But a better example is Daniel, who must have been mightily besieged by temptation to forget God and do homage to the idols of Babylon; temptations in the form of seductions, that appealed to his imagination, that wrought on him with all the imposing greatness of the visible world. These temptations assailed him before he felt those others, like the terrors of the lions' den. Christian experience teaches that such temptations are the most dreadful. For what is most powerful in turning away from God is most to be dreaded. When Daniel had conquered these temptations by faith, the den of savage lions was a tame affair in comparison. Tempted by the promise of pardon, Cranmer signed a recantation of what he had been professing and preaching. Truly penitent for this, he declared that nothing could afford him consolation but the prospect of extenuating his guilt by encountering the fiery torments that awaited him. He accordingly met his death at the stake with the utmost fortitude, giving his right hand to the flames to be consumed first, exclaiming: "This unworthy hand, this unworthy hand!" Such was the sentiment of a fine spirited, intelligent Englishman and Christian, and a leader in that Reformation that was the regeneration of Christendom. In his story, the ordeal of temptation and the ordeal of burning at the stake present no incongruity in combination. For him the ordeal of temptation was the more terrible, and in an ascending climax, should be named after bonds and burning, like the climax of the Apostle: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted. Thus we would accept the word *ἐπειράσθη* as the genuine text. And as the word in its combination is half of its significance, we would accept all that he thus implies, and learn what is to be thought of temptation by a properly instructed Christian mind. This seems to us a better sort of criticism than that which goes about amending by conjectures a text so well supported. There is even at hand a better vindication of the word as it stands than that which has been given above. Our whole epistle is that vindication. It is written to believers sorely tempted to forsake the faith of Christ for confidence in the ordinances of the law. The magnitude of the peril finds a measure

in the things that make this epistle so pre-eminent for profound argument and solemn warning. The preface of our chapter is : "we are of faith to the gaining of the soul and not of shrinking back to destruction." Under that caption, the faith that triumphs over the temptation to shrink back to destruction must be one of the greatest particulars, while temptation of that sort must be one of the most terrible evils of which the chapter is likely to treat. Thus we must regard the captiousness that has been shown about this *ἐπειροσθησαν* as one of the many indications of how little expositors have comprehended the spirit of the writing they were studying. Before leaving this instance of what faith encountered, we may add the three friends of Daniel to the list of those that may have been in the Apostle's mind when he said : **they were tempted**. Their case was like Daniel's. Of another kind was the temptation Nehemiah encountered in the wiles of Sanballat, the Horonite.

They were slain with the sword, like Urijah who was killed by Jehoiakin (Jer. xxvi. 23) and the prophets whom Jezebel killed (1 Kings xix. 10). Worse than death, even than agonizing death, is a life of continual denial and misery. Hence the Apostle concludes by mentioning such as led a life of that kind, as Elijah and Elisha, and we may add John Baptist. For *ἑτεροι δέ* is not now the subject, but the subject of *περιτῆλον* comes in after, and lies in the relative clause : "of whom the world was not worthy." **They went about in sheep skins, in goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated**,

Ver. 38. **Of whom the world was not worthy**, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes of the earth (1 Kings xviii. 4, 13 ; 1 Mace. ii. 28, 29 ; 2 Mace. v. 27 ; vi. 11 ; x. 6). When the Apostle says of these : **of whom the world was unworthy**, as Calvin comments, he reverses the common judgment of mankind. Such vagabonds seemed unfit to be on the earth. The truth was, the earth was unworthy of them.

Ver. 39. **And these all, having witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise of 40. God, who provided something better for us, that they should not without us be made perfect.**

¹ Lün., von Hof.

These all (*οὗτοι πάντες*, not "all these") refers to the whole list of ancients mentioned from ver. 4. In *καὶ οὗτοι πάντες*, the **And** so conjoins the present statement with what precedes as to signify that something different from the foregoing line of thought is to be expressed. And, accordingly, we have it said of "these all" that they **were borne witness to through their faith**. In ver. 2 it was said: "the ancients were borne witness to in faith" (*ἐν τῷ πίστει*, *i. e.*, faith), meaning that by scripture or other testimony they have this good report. Here it is expressed that **by their faith** (*διὰ τῆς πίστεως*) they have this testimony just as other things have been said of them as coming about by faith (*πίστιν, διὰ π.*) *e. g.*, "by faith Abel offered," etc., "through faith subdued kingdoms," etc. This change of expression and thought lends an emphasis that may be interpreted by translating: "And these all though they were borne witness to through their faith," *i. e.*, men of faith though these were, all of them.¹ The transition to the different line of thought appears plainly in what is affirmed of "these all." They **received not the promise of God**; for so we translate, connecting *τοὺς θεοὺς* with *τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ*. For this we have the example of Clement of Alexandria, and Chrysostom.² The justification of this is found chiefly in what we have shown at x. 36 concerning the use of *ἐπαγγελία* in this epistle. The Author does not use it in a way to invest it with a meaning of its own, so that when he says: "the promise," it must mean *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, the promise of salvation by the Messiah. Wherever it is used, we must look to the context to explain what promise is meant. At ix. 15 this explanation is given: "the promise of the everlasting inheritance." And here, accordingly, it is expressed what promise is meant by calling it: **the promise of God**. This would lead us to suppose that *the reference is to the promise of entering God's rest*, mentioned iv. 1, and made so much of by the Apostle, especially in this respect, *viz.*, that the promise of entering God's rest is still existent and valid, and that we are not too late for it. And that such is the reference is made certain by the fact that the Author in the verses before us recurs to the same notion of the promise in question not being a matter

¹ Comp. Del., Alford.² See in Del.

of finished history, and of our not being too late for it. We find additional intimation of what promise is meant in the clause: **that they might not be perfected.** Had they received the promise, they would first have been perfected, as they must be who receive ($\chiοιμίζω$)¹ the promise of rest, *i. e.*, enter on its enjoyment (comp. x. 1, 14; xii. 23). **The promise** intended, then, is the promise of entering God's rest; and the Author identifies it by calling it: "the promise of God." Identifying the promise thus, prepares us for the sentiment the Apostle proceeds to express. To receive that promise of entering God's rest, *i. e.*, to enter the rest would be the consummation of human history in earthly relations. Had those ancients received that promise, then those that have come after would never have appeared in history at all; or had that promise been given and the rest entered on, then all after would have been too late for the promise. But the Apostle has elaborately shown in iv. 1-11 that such is not the case, and in view of this, and that the promise is left of entering God's rest, he says here that God provided better for us than that the ancients should receive that promise.

Who provided something better concerning us. It is usual to construe $\tauοὺ \thetaεοῦ . . . \piροβλεψαμένου$ as a gen. absolute. The construction adopted above makes $\piροβλεψ.$ in apposition with $\tau. \thetaεοῦ$. Though $\piροβλεψ.$ is $\acute{\alpha}\piαξ \lambdaεγ.$ in the New Testament, and rarely found anywhere in Greek authors,² no one has succeeded in detecting any singular significance in its use here, or why a more common synonym of the rendering given might not have been used.³ Perhaps the sanctified wit of Bengel divines the motive for its present selection: *Exquisitum verbum. Quae nondum videt fides, Deus providet*, Gen. xxii. 8, 14; John vi. 6. *Ex hac provisione fluxit tota economia temporum et testimonium Dei ad veteres.*

The words before us, with the following clause, have proved very perplexing to expositors. The more common view understands the $\chiρῆιτόν \tauι$ to express comparison between the ancients and us ($\acute{\gamma}\muῶν$), and the meaning to be: God has made our situa-

¹ Comp. at vi. 12.

² See Grimm's *Lex.*, *sub voc.*; LXX. Ps. xxxvii. 13.

³ Comp. Alford.

tion better than theirs. This is the coloring given by the rendering: "God having provided some better thing for us,"¹ which is not changed by the translation: "some better thing concerning us."² This leads to the question: what is the better thing provided for us that the ancients had not? To this it is more commonly answered the promised Messiah and His finished work.³ But this is inadmissible, because from the relation of our participial clause to the foregoing: "they received not the promise," it would mean that we have received what they did not receive; whereas in fact according to iv. 11, we have no more received the promise than they. It does not obviate this fact to say,⁴ that the mighty difference is, that for the ancients the promise was simply future, while for us it is at once present and future. For, beside what has been objected, we see that it is the Apostle's meaning to express *likeness* between the ancients and us, as the following clause shows: **that they without us should not be perfected.**

Delitzsch,⁵ though rejecting it, shows that "the prevalent interpretation among the fathers" did not represent the Apostle as saying, that the case of Christian believers was better than that of the ancients, but that God has provided something better with respect to them than would have been had the ancients received the promise, instead of not receiving, as was the fact. And such, we believe, is the proper construction of the language before us. At vi. 9 we have seen that τὰ χρεῖττονα does not express a comparison with the bad things or bad persons previously described, as if the Author said: "We are persuaded of you better things than of those," or that you are better than those persons. In contrast with the previously mentioned persons and their things, he says of his readers: "we are persuaded the better things," meaning things in themselves good, and better than *other good* things, in a sense previously established. So in the words before us: χρεῖττόν τι expresses no comparison with the persons previously mentioned, *i. e.*, "the ancients." But here, unlike vi. 9 (τὰ χρεῖττονα) the χρεῖττον has no definite article, and is thus no defi-

¹ Version 1611.² Version 1881.³ Comp. Owen.⁴ As Del.⁵ See also Alford.

nite notion in itself, but expressly (τι) an indefinite notion, which must receive its definition from the context. This is not to be found in the clause *ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῇ*.¹ For the force of *ἵνα* would be connected with the *προβλεψαμ.*, and it would be expressed, that God did something better for us in order that they might not be perfected without us, which makes no sense. Nor is it made sense by saying: "The divine counsel only comes into consideration so far as that what they did not obtain, he would so let be obtained that we shall not be left out."² That, we believe, is what the passage expresses. It could not, however, be the sense of the construction just referred to. It is the sense of that we offer. The indefinite *κρείττον τι* finds its definition in the foregoing clause, *οὐκ ἐχομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν*, i. e., in the thing there denied, viz., that they received the promise. The better providence for us was, that they received not the promise, antecedent to which their perfecting must be accomplished. It is objected to this notion "that then neither a less good thing nor a worse thing would befall us, seeing there would be no place for us at all,"³ the meaning of this being that when believers are "perfected" that finishes all; then is heaven, and no marriage and no posterity. But this objection has force against our interpretation only as amplified by the fathers, "who commonly expound *ἐπαγγελία* here as *perfectio in resurrectione corporum*," i. e., the end of history,⁴ and take: "being perfected" as the equivalent of: "receiving the promise." But even then the interpretation is not rendered absurd. For there is nothing absurd in rejoicing that God has ordered the history of grace so that we have had time to be born and to share the glories of redemption and the promised inheritance.

But the Apostle neither expresses nor means, that had "all these" **received the promise**, then we would never have had being to partake of salvation. He has already iv. 1 sqq. treated the case of being too late for the promise, not merely as conceivable but as actually supposed; and in that connection he has affirmed and proved, that the gospel is preached to us as well as to the ancients, and concluded with the exhortation: "let us give dili-

¹ As von Hof.² von Hof.³ von Hof.⁴ See in Del.

gence to enter into that rest." It is this that underlies the present expression when he says: God has provided in respect to us something better than that the ancients should be perfected and receive the promise without us. They did not receive that promise. They are only perfected with us. The same consummation is now before them that is before us. And with this representation the mind of the reader is prepared for the inspiring conception presented xii. 1 sqq.

Having ascertained the meaning of the first clause of ver. 40, the relation of the second: *that (ὅτι) they should not without us be perfected*, is obvious. It is to be connected with: *they did not receive the promise*. The *ὅτι* has its proper telic force, and expresses, not consequence, but the aim of their not receiving the promise. But this does not make a mere parenthesis of: *God having provided—better for us*, if that be the correct rendering; our rendering does not present the difficulty. For the *πρὸς ἡμᾶς* expresses that their not receiving the promise was due to a providence in respect to us (*πρὸς ἡμᾶς*).

That providence accomplished the redemption of the heirs of salvation in such a way that the ancients were not perfected without us. The implied meaning of this expression is, that they were perfected with us. *To be perfected* and *to receive the promise* are not identical notions; ¹ nor are they to be referred to the same period, viz., the final consummation (ix. 28). At x. 14 we have seen that the perfecting of believers is effected by the offering of Christ, and is that act by which they are brought into a perfect relation to God, so that they may draw near to him boldly, undeterred by the consciousness of guilt. *As relates to Christ*, who effects this perfection, he is said to have sanctified and perfected them forever when his sacrifice was accomplished. *As relates to believers*, they are represented as sanctified and perfected *ipso facto*, when they believe, by virtue of that which Christ accomplished by his sacrifice. But here we have the express statement regarding believers *before* Christ came, who had "faith on God" (vi. 2), that God provided that they should not be perfected without us, implying that their perfecting was accomplished

¹ Against de Wette, etc.

by the same transaction that accomplished ours. In the case of believers *since* Christ came, their perfecting takes place successively in time, as they successively become united to Christ. In the case of believers *before* Christ came, the only conceivable notion is, that they all at the same time were perfected when the sacrifice of Christ was accomplished. This was not merely when he died, but when through death he nullified him that had the power of death, *i. e.*, the devil, and delivered them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage (ii. 14, 15).

We have not, then, to ask :¹ how can the representation that departed believers, as well those that still live, have not received the promise and are hereafter to be perfected, harmonize with xii. 23, where, without doubt, the *δίκαιοι τετελειωμένοι* include the pious ancients? For we see that the question is prompted by the erroneous assumption that : **receive the promise**, and : **be perfected** are identical notions. But it is even obvious at a glance that there is no discrepancy. For whatever "the spirit of just men made perfect," may be, the readers, of whom the Apostle says : "ye are come to the spirits," etc., are conceived of as there where the perfected just ones are, and so must be perfected in the same sense.

Our verses justly give occasion to important dogmatic inference.² Appeal is made to ix. 15 as erroneously interpreted, that there it is expressed that Christ's mediatorial work has retrospective efficacy, by which, and not till His work was done, the transgressions of the pious of all past ages against the law were redeemed. Combining that with the present statement, that the ancient believers were not perfected without us, the inference is made that they awaited in an intermediate state, Hades, the completion of Christ's work. Then the efficacy of His work, in fact, He Himself, by descending into Hades, delivered them, taking them with Him into heaven. Though we cannot make the appeal to ix. 15 in precisely this way, still, as we have pointed out the necessary inference from ix. 15, and as we have just interpreted our passage, they clearly give expression to this thought. We have also clearly expressed here what is plainly and frequently expressed elsewhere in the New Testament, viz., that believers who have died

¹ As de Wette.

² See, *e. g.*, Del., Ebrard, McLean.

still await that completion of salvation that is the goal of all Christ's redemptive work, which is here called "receiving the promise," and ix. 15 is called "receiving the everlasting inheritance," and ix. 28, "Christ's appearing a second time for salvation to those expecting him," and in 2 Tim. iv. 8 is called "the crown of righteousness which the Lord shall give in that day to all that have loved his appearing."

Ver. 1. **Wherefore, we also, having such a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying off every weight and the closely clinging sin, let us run with patience the race set before us.**

We have seen how the foregoing verses (xi. 39, 40) prepare for this impressive exhortation. The **Wherefore** need refer no further back; for the : **these all** comprehends all that could be comprehended by referring **Wherefore** to all of chap. xi. By referring it only to verses 39, 40, we have statements about the whole list of ancients that make the premise of what is brought in by the **Wherefore**.¹ If they died without receiving the promise, yet through life showed faith as is witnessed of them, then let us also (*zai*) run our race with patience. The exhortation is graphically and beautifully given by representing all these examples of faith as a surrounding cloud of witnesses. They are not partakers of the race in the race-course. Their race is run; they have had their season of faith and patience. They are an attending "crowd," which is expressed by νέφος = **cloud**, and by which nothing more is meant.² By μαρτύρων is not meant merely spectators; yet the idea of spectators is not excluded. They are witnesses, in the double sense of the word in English, being such as give testimony to faith, and witness as spectators of the effect of their testimony in us.³ Yet it is pressing the expression too far to say that our text implies the actual presence about us of departed believers. They see what we do under the influence of their example, in such a sense as Abraham is said to have seen Christ's day.⁴ "As is recognized by most expositors, Jesus reveals a fact of the invisible world, of which He alone had the knowledge.

¹ von Hof.

² Comp. Alford.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 2.

⁴ von Hof.; comp. Meyer, Godet on John viii. 56.

As, at the Transfiguration, we see Moses and Elias instructed about the circumstances of the earthly life of Jesus, so Jesus declares that Abraham, the father of the believers, did not remain a stranger, in the abode of glory, to the fulfillment of the promise made to him; but that he contemplated the advent of Christ on the earth. We are, indeed, ignorant of the way in which events here below can be made sensible to those that rest in the bosom of God. Jesus simply affirms the fact.”¹ These representations suit very well to those ancients, who, as it is intimated in ver. 40, having finished this life, and having since been perfected, are with Christ. Being perfected, with those still on earth, by the same offering of Christ, for which they waited, there is a union and communion between them and those that have still the race of faith to run. By that communion they surround the latter; the witness borne to their faith makes them witnesses themselves to testify that by faith and patience the promise is to be inherited and at last received. And this is the primary notion. But witnesses of this sort both give testimony and are spectators while they do so, as those of whom Paul speaks to Timothy, when he says: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, where unto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession *in the sight of many witnesses*.”² So these witnesses are spectators. It corroborates this interpretation of the Apostle’s meaning to notice, that in vers. 22–24, he expresses in another form, and more distinctly, the presence in communion with us, *where we are come*, of perfected spirits, angels and Christ. In our verse the reference is only to the ancient believers. This is because they only have been mentioned in the previous discourse, and because the circumstances to which the Epistle is addressed did not admit of appeal to the testimony of believers after Christ. But it is obvious that what is said of the ancients is equally true of those that since Christ’s death, have been perfected by His offering, and have in their turn died without receiving the promise of God, *i. e.*, of entering God’s rest. The latter are included, indeed, in the representation ver. 23.

Under the inspiring and animating influence of the surround-

¹ Godet on John viii. 56.

² 1 Tim. vi. 12.

ing witnesses, we are exhorted to run our race, and as the condition of running well, we are to **lay aside every weight**, as racers will do in an earthly course, by which is meant any thing that is superfluous and may be dispensed with, even though innocent or indifferent ; and also **the closely clinging sin**. *Εὐπερίστατον*, translated “easily besetting,”¹ is a word that is found in no other Greek author who does not quote it from our text. The most probable meaning is, something worn that is likely to wind itself about the limbs as one runs. Though of light texture, it would impede running as much as a weight. The athletes stripped naked to run their races. Such an obstruction to running the race of faith and patience, sin would be, of whatever sort. And what the Apostle means by **sin**, may be sin of any sort. But the article, and the qualification by a peculiar adjective, and the definiteness of “the sin” mentioned ver. 4, are reasons for supposing that by “the closely clinging sin” is meant the temptation to Judaize. The comparison of sin to a closely clinging garment is particularly appropriate, as compared with a weight that may be carried. For sin is part of our person, as the customary garments seem to be.

Let us also run with patience, expresses by the **also**, that the ancients ran *their* race with patience, and we are to imitate that patience in running. The *διὲς ὑπομονῆς* = **by means of patience**, expresses that patience is instrumentally the condition of running the race at all, and that by means of patience it will be run.

Ver. 2 a. **Looking unto the captain and perfecter of our faith, Jesus**

At ii. 10 the appropriate meaning of *ἀρχηγόν* was found to be : **captain**,² and that meaning must be retained here, instead of “Author.”³ It is not as the originator or source of our faith that Jesus is presented here, but as our leader,⁴ under whose direction and inspiring example we run. Accordingly, the following clause represents Him as “fulfilling His course.” This *ἀρχηγόν*, a word of ascertained meaning, must determine for us the sense in which the Author uses *τελειωτήν* (which, like the

¹ Versions 1611, 1881.

² Version 1881, Margin.

³ Versions 1611, 1881.

⁴ Comp. iii. 14, “Companions of Christ.”

foregoing ἐνπερίστατον, is found no where else in Greek literature), and not *vice versa*.¹ It is expedient therefore to render it: **perfecter**, in a purely etymological way. It is **of our faith** (τῆς πίστεως) that Jesus is the **Captain and perfecter**; For here, if ever, the article has the force of a personal pronoun = "the faith that is ours."² And nothing justifies us in imputing faith to Him in any respect,³ any more than we may impute salvation to Him; as if He were saved in some way, because He is called ἀρχηγὸν of our salvation.⁴ As He gave an inspiring example of life for the world to come, and thus is the leader of us who must live the same life by faith, so, as He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, He is the inspiring evidence and representation of what is the goal of our race, where he Himself will bring us. Such we suppose is the correspondence between the designations **captain and perfecter**, and the following representation of what Jesus did. For it is evident that: **who for the joy . . . throne of God**, is intended to represent wherein we find Jesus an ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελευτῶν. The Apostle thus represents Jesus with the surrounding cloud of witnesses, as if in view; and *truly* in view to faith. He does not, however, represent Him in the same way, as at the head of the host of those that have given example of faith;⁵ but in a distinct and eminent way, just as in vers. 23, 24. While the great cloud of witnesses look on us, we are to look to Jesus, and see in Him what He is described to be, which is something very different in itself and in its influence on us, from what the cloud of ancient examples of faith are.

Ver. 2. *b*. **Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Beside what has been necessarily remarked on this by anticipation, the following points need explanation. A natural rendering of ἀντί is, "instead of." So rendered, this clause would express that Jesus endured the cross instead of choosing rather some joy that might have been His. And so it has been inter-

¹ Against von Hof.

² Kühner, Gram., II., p. 482.

³ Against Ebrard, de Wette, Davidson.

⁴ ii. 10.

⁵ Against de Wette, etc.

preted by ancients and moderns ;¹ some understanding by the joy, the bliss of heaven that Jesus left to do the work of redemption,² others, the happiness that Jesus might honestly have had, seeing no sin in Him incurred the infliction of suffering.³ But it has been satisfactorily objected to this interpretation, that the bliss of heaven, as something "set before" the Son of God in His pre-existent state, is an incongruous notion. It is also in conflict with every scriptural representation concerning Christ, to suppose that the pleasures of human life were ever "set before" Him by any other than Satan in the temptation. Those who think of the latter, *i. e.*, worldly pleasure, mean chiefly that Jesus might have been exempt from everything that molests. But that is a very negative notion to express by *χαρά* = joy. Alford justly urges also that *χαρά* can hardly be "used of a state of bliss in which one already is, a quiescent or pre-existent joy, but more naturally applies to joy prompted by some cause of active rejoicing." It is preferable on every account, as it is quite in harmony with the progress of thought in the context, to understand this clause in the way that is now most usual. Jesus, for the reward of His mediatorial work, as believers for "the everlasting inheritance," endured the cross, despised shame, and **has sat down** at the right hand of the throne of God. The perfect expresses that Jesus is there now ; and there it is we look when we look unto Him, and there the cloud of witnesses are with Him. This need not mean that the session at the right hand is the joy, in the prospect of which He did as described. That is no more the consummation of His joy as Mediator, than to be with Him is for believers the consummation of salvation and receiving the crown. But when He sat at the right hand, His sufferings and shame were past. Following Him there brings the believer also to the end of his race. According to the representation of our epistle, Jesus waits at the right hand till He comes again unto salvation for those that expect His appearing. Believers who have finished their course wait with Him where He is for that appearing. Such is the situation that justifies the representation of our verses 1, 2, in which the perfected saints (vers. 23, 24), and Jesus appear

¹ See in Alford.² Comp. Phil. iii. 6-11.³ So, *e. g.*, Calvin.

together as attending the life of faith of those who still have their race to run.

Ver. 3. **For consider him that hath endured such contradiction of sinners against himself** (ἐαυτόν), **that ye may not grow weary, fainting in your souls.**

The relation expressed here by : **For** is that it introduces the reason for looking to Jesus as the foregoing verse has directed. Our verse bids the readers institute a comparison (ἀναλογισασθε), for such is the significance of the word. As the following verse shows, it is a comparison of their experience with that of Jesus. In the light of that, the readers must feel the motive for running their race with patience, as they must at the thought of the surrounding cloud of witnesses that have run their race with patience. The Apostle expresses the point that he would have appear by the comparison. As comparison is intended, there is, first, something in common, and then something that is different. The thing in common is **enduring contradiction**.¹ If the readers experienced that, as they expressly did,² so also did Jesus. What Jesus endured directly, they endured because they confessed Jesus. But this is the difference : **Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners against himself**, which is so expressed as to signify an antithesis between Himself and sinners, and denote that He as sinless encountered the opposition and malignity of sinners,³ and such was not the case of the readers. Without such antithesis, the εἰς ἑαυτόν is redundant.⁴ Moreover, Jesus endured **such** (τοιαύτην) contradiction, the reference being to the shame and cruelty of the cross already expressed.

The consideration of this difference must keep the reader from fainting in soul and growing weary in running, as one who runs a race becomes faint-hearted when his knees become weak. For these expressions are used with reference to the image of running a race, used ver. 1.

Ver. 4. **Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against the sin, 5 a, and have forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons :**

¹ Comp. Acts xiii. 45 ; xxviii. 22.

³ Comp. 1 Peter ii. 21, 23.

² x. 32-34.

⁴ So von Hof.

The inference of the foregoing comparison with Jesus was that the readers had not suffered enough to excuse their disheartenment. This thought is here expressly uttered, but with a change of figure. The Apostle changes from the race-course to the boxing arena.¹ This is no mixing of figures. It marks a transition to fresh matter of admonition. The race-course figure represents what the readers have yet to do. The boxing figure (*ἀνταγωνίζεσθαι*) describes what they had been doing. Their contest with **the sin** had been mere boxing, and not "blood-earnestness," as appeared from the fact that no life had been lost in the struggle. For such we suppose is the meaning of **unto blood**, and not that the blood-letting is meant, that often attended boxing, and that they had only had bruises and no blood drawn.² It encourages this interpretation that, in x. 32 sqq., the account of what the readers suffered stops short of mentioning bloodshed and martyrdom. The Apostle says **the sin**, which must mean that referred to x. 26, since nothing else that is said in the epistle can answer to such a definite notion. The sin of turning from Christ to trusting in legal ordinances, as it was their temptation through "the contradiction" of such as crucified Jesus, so it was to be withstood in the persons of such; and withstanding was likely to involve death as it did the death of Jesus. It had not come to this; and the Apostle intimates that this was owing to the way they had striven, as merely boxing. A sin so great, with consequences so fearful, must be resisted with the earnestness that will give up life's blood rather than yield.

The light way in which the readers had treated the struggle the Apostle makes the ground for an inference that they had forgotten one important truth of Divine providence. For the *καὶ* = **and**, does not merely conjoin an additional thought. It has a logical force = **and so**,³ introducing an inference from what has just been stated. Believers that have acted as the readers have done, show that they have forgotten that God chastens his children. The meaning is, that they have supposed that God could not mean them to undergo such suffering as must attend unyielding

¹ Bengel.² Against von Hof., Alford.³ Kühner Gram. II., p. 792, § 521, 5.

resistance of the sin. This was forgetting the declaration of the Scripture that was directly to the contrary. It is Prov. iii. 11 sqq. that is referred to. Before quoting it, the Apostle describes the tenor of it. It is an **exhortation**. It is such as (*ῥῆτις*) **reasons with** believers ; and the language of expostulation in the citation (**despise not, neither faint, for whom the Lord**, etc.) as well as the tenor of the whole section from which it is taken justifies his calling it **reasoning with them** (*διαλέγεται*). It does this **as with sons**, as the expression : **my son**, and a parental tone throughout the context evinces. It is the passage or exhortation itself that thus reasons; the Apostle does not say that God does, though such is the fact. The important thing is : *what* is said, and that it is Scriptural. The point is, that a passage of Scripture, that breathes the spirit of a father, declares such things about suffering and chastisement.

Ver. 5 *b*. **My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him.** 6. **For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**

This quotation is not an exact reproduction of the LXX., nor is it an exact rendering of the Hebrew original. "It shows that the Author was acquainted with the Hebrew."¹ The changes from the LXX. are in the direction of closer conformity to the Hebrew, while at the same time they are such as adapt the passage more to the use to which the Apostle applies it. It is not necessary for the interpretation of our text to consider the critical and exegetical questions that arise from a comparison of the words as we find them here, and in the LXX., and the Hebrew. This is done very thoroughly by von Hofmann. What the Apostle says, using of the language in Proverbs, is not with a view to comforting the readers. As found here and in their original context, they are commonly used in that way, and with great propriety. But the Apostle's use of them is for admonition and **exhortation**, and that with some severity ; for which there seems sufficient reason.² He calls it *ἡ παρακλήσις* = **the exhortation**, the word having the same meaning here as at xiii. 22, where it characterizes the whole epistle. His readers

¹ von Hof.

² Against Del.

would notice that he changes the ἐλέγχει of the LXX. to παιδεύει, *i. e.*, from “reprove” to “chasten.”¹ **He chastens**, consists better with the relation of father and son, and with the state of things that calls for this admonition.² The smiting and chastening are the notions of the passage that are emphasized, and that make it so appropriate for the Author’s purpose. Thus, instead of the Hebrew that reads: “As a father with a son he takes delight,”³ the Apostle adheres to the incorrect rendering of the LXX. **He scourges every son whom he receiveth.** The Apostle shows his mastery of the Scriptures equally by correcting and by adopting the rendering of the LXX. It is not his purpose to express that God *loves* though He does chasten; but that He *chastens and smites*, though He is a father, *i. e.*, loves.⁴

The Apostle, as we have noted, appeals to the Scripture, blaming his readers with forgetting what is there made so plain, and should be so familiar. They were fainting instead of fighting; they recognized the need of “striving against the sin,” to the extent of making it a boxing affair, but not a bloody conflict. The particular language of Scripture with which he would confront them is in the words: “My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.” But the rest of the quotation is too closely interwoven in sense as well as structure to be omitted. It brings in, however, by its pointed affirmation, the notion of the spirit and significance of Divine chastening. The Apostle, then, lets this give the impulse to the progress of his thought, and applies it to the suffering situation of the readers. He maintains the severity, but blends with it consolation and encouragement. Thus he follows the last words of his quotation with an inference as quick and obvious as light.

Ver. 7 *a.* **It is for⁵ chastening ye endure; God deals with you as with sons.**

It is thus, with the force of Scripture warrant for it, that the Apostle stamps the sufferings the readers endured, and reveals their true nature, and points to what they signify. It is the seal

¹ See Rev. iii. 19, where both are used.

² von Hof.

³ Del.

⁴ von Hof.

⁵ εἰς instead of ἐν, see Aliord.

of their being sons of God. If God deals with them as sons, then they are sons that God is dealing with. And the further discourse shows that it is the latter notion that is meant to be prominent. There is such force in the present tense here used.¹ **God deals with you as sons**, is not the use of the present tense in the common form of stating an abstract proposition. The Apostle speaks to the concrete case. His readers are enduring conflict with its attendant suffering. The meaning of that is chastening, such chastening as the Proverb describes. And the meaning of chastening is that God deals with them as sons. It was at ii. 10 sq. that we last had the expression: **sons** applied to those whom God leads to glory. There the Apostle speaks of them in the third person. Now he speaks of the readers as sons in the second person. But the present seal of their sonship is suffering, not glory. The glory is yet to be revealed.²

The thought already expressed is continued and enforced argumentatively.

Ver. 7 *b*. **For what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?**

This is an appeal to the general in support of the particular. The idea of the parental or filial relation involves parental chastisement of the son. Thus sons of God must expect chastisement from God. What is affirmed here interrogatively, as self-evidential, prepares the dilemma; either accept and endure chastisement from God, or renounce the name of son.

Ver. 8. **But if ye are without chastisement, of which all have become partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**³

The πάντες = all, does not refer to any persons that have been adduced as suffering chastisement, *e. g.*, those mentioned in chapter xi.⁴ Our verse has the foregoing verse as its logical premise, which affirms interrogatively that all who are sons do suffer chastisements. It is this general that is resumed in our expression: **of which all are partakers**, in order to make, in effect,

¹ Riehm, pp. 758 sq.

² Comp. Rom. viii. 18.

³ von Hof. would connect the following *εἴρα* with what precedes it, and not with what follows, and would translate: "and not sons then."

⁴ Against Lün., Del.

though not formally, a complete syllogism of our verse. If all sons are partakers of chastisement, and the readers are without it, then they are no sons. The representation is in general respecting the notion : **sons** ; but it is meant to apply to the particular : sons of God ; which application the reader must necessarily make himself. The notion of **not sons**, is emphasized by an affirmative contrary : **bastards**. The intended antithesis is : genuine and spurious ; and giving precision to his thought in this fashion, is justified by the situation. The Apostle's readers professed to be the people of God, *i. e.*, sons. If they were not truly sons, the proper designation for them would be bastards.¹ This antithesis of sons and bastards, however, is neither self-evident nor natural. The notion : not sons, is realized in slave, enemy, foreigner, and many things in fact, any one of which would quite as well, or even better, signify one that can have no share in the paternal care of God, if that² were what the Apostle means to signify by : **bastards**. The idea that the Author means by *νόθοι* children of adultery, whom the mother would impose on her husband as his,³ seems incongruous in the last degree. von Hofmann interprets as follows : God has no children but those that are legitimate. On his part, then, we cannot be *νόθοι*. But he leaves none of his children without chastisement. Thus the premise : "if ye are without chastisement," expresses what in reality does not occur. But if it is assumed as real, it has as a consequence what exists in reality as little as the other. Such a filial relation to God must be another than that on which God visits chastisement ; he must have begotten them illegitimately, and hence he does not bring them up with and like His legitimate children. But as there are none such, then they are not any way children of God. von Hofmann adds, that the words do not express this unless the apodosis includes the word *ἐῖτα*, so as to read *καὶ οὐχ ὅτι ἐῖτα* ; which construction he defends by reasons respecting the use of *ἐῖτα*. This seems, however, only a very cumbersome way of reiterating : **ye are not sons**. We prefer the explanation, that we find in

¹ Comp. Calvin.² So Chrysostom, and many since. *e. g.*, Del., Alford.³ Grotius.

Lindsay which, because of the little notice taken of it, deserves amplification. It seems evident that the ground for the antithesis of **sons** and **bastards** is in the elements of the situation to which the Author writes, and his way of regarding it. If the Author be Paul, we are justified in interpreting him here by his expressed sentiments in Gal. iv. 21–31. We may do so any way, seeing it is manifest that our Author has so much of Paul's way of thinking. In the letter to the Galatians the Apostle contends against the Judaizing spirit, and the disposition of his readers to use legal ordinances, quite as he does here, except that he writes to Gentiles and not Jews. In Gal. iv. 21 sqq., he uses the story of Hagar and her son and Sarah and her son as an allegory, to represent the relations of those who profess to be God's people on the ground of the law given at Sinai, and those who profess the same on the ground of faith in Christ. The former he likens to the son of the handmaid, the latter to the son of the free woman and real wife. In our context the Author is dealing with another aspect of the same problem. His readers were flinching before Jewish persecution that could only be escaped by conforming to Judaism. The **being without chastisement** was in this particular case to turn to legal ordinances; for only in that way were the "contradictions" to be escaped, whereby the chastisement came. The alternative was to be truly and only Christian, *i. e.*, to have faith unto salvation, and thus to endure suffering; or to escape suffering by Judaizing. This is the situation that offers the antithesis, that the Apostle characterizes by **sons** and **bastards**. He does this from the view point that, in Gal. iv. 21 sqq., prompts the representation there. In Greek relations, νόθοι was the designation for sons begotten of a female slave.¹ They were not treated in education or inheritance as legitimate sons. There is a relation of **not sons** to God, that is not that of enemy, or foreigner, or slave. It is that of a Jew whose relation to God, for he has one, is determined by that law that God gave his chosen people. That relation of **not sons** is expressed in Gal. iv. 21 sqq. by "son of the handmaid." In the case to which our context speaks it is quite as appropriate to

¹ See Passow, Lex., *sub voc.*

express it by **bastards**. It is some encouragement to the interpretation thus derived from Gal. iv. to notice, that, as we there find Mt. Sinai opposed to the Jerusalem that is above, to express the relation of the law and of faith in Christ, so also, a few verses later in our context (vers. 18–24), the same contrast is presented, though with much and different amplification. This is additional evidence that the Author in our verse speaks from the same underlying notions that prompt the representations in Gal. iv. In Gal. iv. the casting out of the bond woman and her son allegorizes what must be the treatment by God of those whose relation to Him is only that of law. In our text, what those may expect whose relation is expressed by “bastards” is not further expressed than that they are without chastisement, which is the ground for inferring what they are.

Ver. 9. **Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh as chastizers, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirits and live?**

The appeal has just been to what is true of (the ideal of) all fathers and sons, in order to infer the particular of what must be true of God as a Father and of His sons. Now the appeal is to a *distinction*, wherein God as a Father is superior to common fathers; and from *justifying* the experience of chastisement, the thought proceeds to enjoin how the chastisement *should be accepted*. The first clause expresses its predicate in the imperfect as representing a past experience of a continued and habitual thing. To **our fathers in respect to the flesh** (“for τῆς σαρκὸς is the nearer definition of οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν”)¹ is opposed: **the Father of Spirits**, where the article of τῶν πνευμάτων, may have the force of the possessive **our**. These expressions are derived from Num. xvi. 22; xxvii. 16, where the Hebrew: “God of the spirits of all flesh” is rendered by the LXX.: “God of the spirits and of all flesh.” The Apostle’s expressions are made in consistence with the Hebrew, making God the originator of the spirits of all flesh, while the parentage of the flesh is attributed to men, another evidence that the Author was familiar with the original Hebrew and by no means dependent on the LXX. translation.²

¹ von Hof., comp., e. g., vi. 1.

² So von Hof.

So far as the expressions before us throw light on the debate concerning traducianism and creationism¹ it is in favor of the views represented by the latter name.² But that subject is incidental, and has little to do with interpreting what the Apostle is now urging. The contrast of the two parental relations here expressed is to signify the superiority of that found in God, and thus the greater obligation to submit to his chastisement. It is with the flesh and its existence that earthly parents deal. The emphatic way in which: **we shall live** (ζήσομεν) is said in the clause that speaks of: **our spirit**, shows that "flesh and spirit" are here contrasted in that way that is common in Paul's epistles.³ The present context, however, does not deal with the whole of that antithesis, but simply with flesh as inferior and perishable, and spirit as superior and destined to live. To parents that were only such for the flesh, we showed reverence. But God is the source of our spirits and deals with them, giving them life and sustaining that life. Shall we not rather **be in subjection to him**? The argument is a *minore ad majus*, and: **subjection** is intended to express a higher degree of the same thing that is expressed by **reverence**.

Ver. 10. **For they, indeed, chastened us for a few days as to them seemed good, but he unto profit for [our] partaking of his holiness.**

The μέν—ὁὖν only mark antithesis; and translating the μέν = "verily"⁴ gives in English an emphasis to the first clause that is not intended. The contrast of parents presented in ver. 9 is particularized here, not by way of example, but in the particular respect for which the Author makes the contrast; for he is speaking of chastisements. It is not to be supposed that he contrasts a low ideal of earthly parents and of parental motive with the divine parental relation. This, however, is the impression made by the rendering: "after their own pleasure,"⁵ which seems to describe the chastisement of earthly parents as capricious and having respect to their advantage and not the child's.

¹ See Del.² So Del., Riehm.³ With Ebrard; against Del.⁴ Versions of 1611, 1881.⁵ Version of 1611.

According to that, the antithesis would seem to be, that God, on the contrary, chastens for *our* profit. If such were the emphasis, the personal pronoun: "our" would need to be expressed; whereas we read only ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον. The Author contrasts a good ideal of earthly parent with our divine parent; and the best motives of the former with the aim of the latter. The former, he says, **chastened** (imperfect) κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς, by which is meant, according to such wisdom as they had; as the ἔδοξε μοι¹ of Luke i. 3 expresses that the Evangelist is moved to write according to his best judgment of what the circumstances demand. The point of contrast is, that so chastising, they did it: πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας = **for a few days**. By this is not expressed the time during which they chastised, but the period for which their chastisement availed. "As πρὸς τὸ παρόν (ver. 11) means, not while it lasts, but for the continuance of the present, and as παιδέυεσθαι πρὸς τὸ μέλλον² means: to learn wit for the future," so our phrase means to chastise one for a short period, *i. e.*, for a brief benefit.³ This interpretation is in harmony with the idea of earthly parents expressed in the foregoing verse, where, as we have seen, they are called: "fathers of the flesh," with respect to the temporal and mortal nature of that relation. Corresponding to that, such chastisement as they gave is here described as having a proportionate efficacy, *i. e.*, for a little while. On the other hand, and in similar correspondence to the designation: "Father of spirits," and to the affirmation that to "be in subjection to him is to live," our verse says, that God chastens us **unto profit**, which **profit** it interprets to be that: **we may be partakers** of his holiness. As this is an abiding relation and so an abiding advantage, it expresses a contrast with: "for a few days," without needing a more exact antithesis. "It is not the duration of the chastisement that is the point of the passage; it is the duration of our relation in each case to him who chastens."⁴

Ver. 11. **All chastisement for the present indeed seems not to be matter of joy, but of grief, but afterward it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that have been exercised by it.**

¹ Comp. Acts xv. 22, 25, 28.

² So von Hof., Del.

³ Polyb., 2, 9, 6.

⁴ Davidson.

In the uncertain condition of the text with reference to *πᾶσα* δέ or *πᾶσα μὲν*, it seems preferable to translate without reference to either particle. In the first clause we have an ambiguous construction, viz., we may connect *πρὸς τὸ παρόν* with *παιδία* or with *οὐ δοκεῖ*, and translate "chastisement for the present" or "seems for the present." We think, however, as intimated under the foregoing verse, that : **chastisement for the present** expresses the subject, of which it is predicated that it **seems not a matter of joy**. This exactly resumes the notion of chastisement as already presented ; it is for an effect in the period when given and suited to that period. We need not debate whether the : **all chastisement** refers to that of God, or of both God and earthly parents. It is the ideal of chastisement that the Apostle has in mind. It is evidently his intention to express, that chastisement *is* good, as he has expressed in the foregoing verse. This notion *is* expressed by the phrase : **chastisement for the present**, which denotes that chastisement is the exigency of the present when it is given. To say : all chastisement seems for the present not a matter of joy, leaves wholly unexpressed whether it is good at all for the present, while the following clause would then express that all the good is in the after fruit. This leaves present chastisement, for the present, an incomprehensible mystery. That the Author does not so mean, appears from his likening it to the gymnast's hard training in exercise (*γεγυμνασμένοις*). Those who experience the chastisement of persecution and seduction to apostasy are exercised as the gymnast. For the latter, that is the severe discipline for the present when in training. It *seems* not a matter of joy ; but it *is* good, and thus he rejoices in it. It is the condition requisite to later triumph. He knows the full import of it, and it is no mystery, to be solved only as the event shall show. In the same way the Apostle presents : **chastisement for the present**. He would have the readers take it, not for what it seems, but for what it is. **Afterward, it yields its result to those that have been exercised by it**, by which he means no mere passive endurance of its evils, but an active and willing subjection to them, like the training of the gymnast. This is a new figure of speech, and no recurrence to the image of the

arena used ver. 4. The result he expresses by : **peaceable fruit of righteousness**. This Tholuck¹ interprets : "Fruit of righteousness enjoyed after conflict in perfect peace." The expression, we think, hints at the disposition of the readers to secure peace by compliance with the seductions to apostasy, and avoiding conflict. That would be no fruit of righteousness, but the contrary ; and while the present without chastisement might seem peace and a matter of joy, it must afterward be destruction.

The Apostle has now animated his readers by *three considerations*, to endure with constancy and resolute blood-carnestness, the conflict with "the sin," which, in ver. 4, he intimated they were maintaining with not enough seriousness. He has characterized what they endured as chastisement from God. In this light "the first considerations is, that they should recognize in that God's parental love toward them ; the second, that they should consider the wholesome object of His chastisement ; and the third, that (in view of the second) what they are called to suffer ceases to be an injury."²

Having so admirably presented the motives that should animate his readers, the Apostle turns to exhortation founded on them. It is to be noted that it is just such exhortation as, if heeded, will secure a peace that consists with righteousness.

Ver. 12. **Wherefore, straighten up the relaxed bands and the palsied knees, 13. and make straight paths for your feet, in order that what is lame may not be turned out of the way, but rather be healed.**

It seems unlikely that the Author still maintains the figures of the race or of the arena, used in the foregoing context. The mention of **the lame** is incompatible with that, as is also the direction : **make paths**. The Author employs other figures here, involved in the scripture language he adopts. That of ver. 12, from Isa. xxxv. 3, comes out of a passage that represents a march through a wilderness, and suits a situation where a great many, of every degree of strength and qualification for such a march, move on as a host together. The context in Isa. xxxv. is consoling and cheering ; but as the Apostle weaves the lan-

¹ See in Del.

² von Hof.

guage into his discourse, he maintains the tone of severity of ver. 4, as modified by the representations of vers. 5-11. He exhorts the readers to set right (*ἀνορθώσατε*, by which is meant: to bring into the right posture for the active use proper to the members mentioned) slack hands and palsied knees. And, borrowing the language of Prov. iv. 26, he adds: **make straight paths for your feet**. Some would render *τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν* = "with your feet," and thus have the meaning: go straight on with your feet.¹ And this they defend against the other rendering, by saying, that it is impossible for our Author to represent Christians as making their own way, where he has declared that Christ has prepared it. This is very short-sighted confusion. The Author may speak of a way that believers must go, without meaning that which Christ prepared. The way of enduring conflict with evil is such a way. Furthermore, the following clause denoting intention, would not fit on to such a meaning as the one just referred to: **in order that what is lame may not be turned out of the way**. Some would translate *ἐκτραπή* = "be put out of joint."² "But whether that meaning can be established or not, it does not fit the subject *τὸ χωλόν*, which does not mean the lame member of the body, but, as a neuter collective noun, is the designation of the lame members of the congregation. Moreover, that meaning does not fit the context; for, though a lame person may put his foot out of joint on a rugged way, here the discourse is not about that kind of way, but about a direct or crooked way."³ In this figurative language the Apostle exhorts his readers, speaking to them collectively as comprising various forms of defective Christian life. Let them correct the defects in themselves. Let them avoid a course that is now to the right, now to the left, by making a straight and direct track. So let them help others (**the lame**) whose imperfections must cause them easily to turn out of a way that is tortuous and ever changing its direction. Whereas, on a direct track they will go safely and even **be healed**, of their imperfection; as **the lame** (by which is meant much the same as by **the palsied**), who, on a good direct

¹ So, e. g., Lün.² de Wette; version of 1881, margin.³ von Hof.

road, along which they may go in regular and measured tread, may even be healed of the lameness that has come from over-exertion on account of straying from the way and recovering it again.

Von Hofmann remarks, that the Author, in using Isa. xxxv. 3, renders the Hebrew more accurately than the LXX., and to this he points as another evidence that the Author was well acquainted with the original text.

Leaving figurative speech, the Apostle proceeds in proper discourse :

Ver. 14. Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord.

What we have already said under ver. 11, and as preface to vers. 12, 13, seems to be still more plainly intimated here. The Apostle's exhortation, like the blame of ver. 4, is directed against a disposition in his readers to treat the present conflict with too little seriousness, and to seek peace by compliance with Judaizing tendencies. Without that background, or something like it, the combination of directions here seems strange ; for the two clauses have no obvious relation of thought to one another. With that background, however, we can see a great fitness in co-ordinating the directions : **seek peace with all men, and the sanctification**, etc. By *πᾶσι* = **all**, is not meant all the brethren, but **all men**, meaning all with whom the readers had relations, including those from whom they experienced contradiction. The readers would seek peace, and the Apostle would have them do so. But he would have it consistently with something higher, viz., seeking to have **the sanctification** "by means of which we see the Lord." He says : **the sanctification**, with the article, by which we should know that it is that sanctification of which the Apostle has spoken so fully, and of which he says : "we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." (x. 10.) When so sanctified, we draw near to God boldly. This that is signified by the definite article is precisely expressed by the following clause : **without which no man shall see the Lord.** By **Lord**, is meant God, we suppose, according to what has been previously expressed as the consequence of sanctification.¹ By saying : **with-**

¹ iv. 16 ; vi. 18-20 ; x. 19-22.

out which no man, etc., instead of the affirmative: by which a man shall see the Lord, the Author gives a minatory as well as a monitory effect to what he says. To those seeking peace as the chief thing, it expresses how much more important it is to seek after the sanctification, than to secure peace with all men. Thus, the former must yield to the latter. Thus our verse is a peculiar and significant way of saying what is said Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." Our expression points to the criterion of the possible. Peace that is consistent with seeking the sanctification may be sought. But peace that is purchased by giving up that way of sanctification, must not be sought. Rather let there be conflict. Though that be present chastisement, it will be followed by a righteous peace. Thus the sentiment of our verse is expressed in a way that resembles what God said by Isaiah:¹ "I cannot stand sacrilege and solemn assembly," where the "and" has special emphasis. As in the latter it is expressed what must not be combined, so in our verse it is expressed what must be combined, meaning, of course, in that way that is compatible. With this interpretation, we observe how tenaciously the Apostle holds to his subject, and how far he is from digressing, even for a moment, in general exhortation.

In harmony with the interpretation of ver. 14 just given, the Apostle proceeds, with a participial construction, to give further directions, which directions thus appear as the means by which effect must be given to the admonition of ver. 14. The directions themselves are obviously fitted for this.

Ver. 15. Taking care lest there be any one withdrawing from the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

It is thus that seeking after peace with others *and* the sanctification that has access to God may be combined. The second is the paramount concern, and, accordingly, the present direction demands that special care be had that no one surrenders it. For: the grace of God² names "the sanctification that shall see the Lord," from another side, that is, God's side. "The motto or

¹ Isa. i. 13.

² Comp. ii. 9-11.

signature of the new era in Christ, was: 'the grace of God,' grace without works of the law."¹ "As it is not a situation² that is designated here, but conduct, ὁσπερεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ means: **to withdraw oneself from the grace of God**, as Eccles. vii. 34, ὁσπερεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν κλαίωντων means: 'remove not thyself from those that weep.'"³ The thought thus expressed is something too distinct from that of the following clause about **the root of bitterness**, for them to be taken as appositional and having the common predicate ἐνοχλή. ⁴ The present is a distinct and particular matter for care, and touches the same case as x. 25, that warns the readers against forsaking their meetings, and x. 35, that exhorts them not to cast away their confidence that has such great reward.

They are to take care also that none become **defiled**. This is the special thing to be prevented. The danger of it comes from something that is emblematically described as a **root of bitterness springing up**, which is of such noxious effect that it **will defile many**, if care be not taken.

In this and vers. 16, 17 the Apostle expresses his thoughts under three different figures, the root of bitterness, the fornicator, the profane person, with Esau as example of the last. These forms of expression could only be understood by Jews, or persons versed in the Old Testament scriptures. This is not mere matter of style. Nor is it merely because the Apostle finds therein suitable figurative expressions or emblems of the things in question. It is because, in revelation and the history of God's people, these names had become the symbols of the things against which he would warn his readers. He treats his readers as the same people of God as those of old.⁵ These symbols are vitally connected with their own history, as madness or the idiosyncrasies of obstinacy or folly with the histories of some families. No other manner of expression could more clearly designate the thing, and stamp its character, and intimate its consequences, all in brief phrase, than these the Apostle uses to his readers. They have that pregnant and portentous significance that Patrick Henry

¹ Del.² iv. 1.³ von Hof., comp. Del.⁴ Against Ebrard, Del., Alford, Lün.⁵ i. 1, 2; iii. 7—iv. 9.

intended, when he said: "Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles I., his Cromwell, and George the third—may profit by their example:" or that is intended when it is said of an Emperor of Germany, or of the Chancellor of the Empire: "He must go to Canosse."

In our verse the Apostle borrows his expression from Deut. xxix. 18: "Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall (margin: 'a poisonous herb') and wormwood." In doing so, he means to bring in with the expression: **root of bitterness**, all the solemn warning of the original context, and apply it to the situation of the readers. In the ancient case, it was yielding to the seductions to idolatry as practised by the surrounding heathen. In the New Testament case of the readers, it was yielding to the seductions to Judaize, compliance with which would be withdrawing from the grace of God. Such a root he intimates is **springing up** (φύσσεια, present participle), which, if let alone, will give **trouble** as poison troubles, and **defile many** as those are defiled who have incurred a curse.¹ By **defile** is expressed the strongest antithesis to "the sanctification" of the foregoing verse. It is likely that the Apostle means by this **root of bitterness** a man,² or persons, and not some evil doctrine or practice. For in Deut. xxix. 18 the reference is to a "man, or woman, or family, or tribe," and in 1 Macc. i. 10 the metaphor is used in the same personal way: "And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus." We must interpret in the same way the expressions that follow, viz., "fornicator," or "profane," of a person or persons.

It seems worth while, before passing from ver. 15 *b.* to remark, that the expression: "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you," is most commonly used in Christian discourse and prayer to mean something very different from what we see the Author means by it. It is used to express the cause of trouble, *i. e.*, of strife in churches and communities. As a phrase, it is so wedded to the notion of rivalries and dissensions and quarrels, as to make readers quite mistake the force of it in the present verse.

Ver. 16 *a.* **Lest** [there be] **any fornicator**. This, of course, is

¹ So de Wette, Lün.

² Comp. Deut. xxix. 19, 27.

said using **fornicator** in its emblematic sense.¹ The appearance of the word between two other expressions of emblematic meaning, makes it impossible to understand it otherwise, even though the Author uses the same word xiii. 4 in its literal sense.² The Apostle refers to Num. xxv. 1-18, as he does in 1 Cor. x. 8, which may be taken as the amplification of the present expression: "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." It was that transgression of Israel with Midian that forever made fornication the symbol of breaking away from God and his covenant to worship idols and have part with idolators. The sin grew out of the seduction of idolatrous company, rather than the love of idols themselves. The Apostle means that withdrawing from the grace of God in Christ to seek sanctity in legal ordinances through regard for those that remained Jews is, for Jewish Christians, a New Testament form of the same sin. In the strikingly related passage 1 Cor. x. 1-14, addressed to Gentiles, it is idolatry proper. In the present application the Apostle follows the precedent of Jesus Himself, who called the Jews that did not believe on him: "this adulterous and sinful generation."³ The **fornicator** against whom the present warning is uttered would be one that would go over to those enemies of Christ. Taking this danger, *i. e.*, such a person, in that considerate spirit commended x. 24, 25, in the incipency of such a character, might prevent the mischief. Dealing with it in the end would require the zeal of a Phineas.

Ver. 16 *b.* **Or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of food sold his own birthright.**

The disjunctive *ἢ* = **or**, separates "**fornicator**" and **profane person**, so that the latter is not to be taken as only another designation for the former. The word βέβηλος = **profane**, is used of places and of persons. Spoken of places, it means what may be walked over by any one, and is opposed to "sacred." Spoken of persons, it means one who invades what is sacred with the same disregard that he would show for what is common, whether

¹ So Ebrard, etc.

² Against Lün., Del., von Hof., Angus.

³ Mark viii. 38; comp. Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4.

through ignorance or contempt. Such persons profane everything holy. But the Apostle himself defines the meaning with which he uses the word by adducing an example of the kind of person. It is Esau.¹ His story is familiar. In the special transaction referred to, he displayed a frivolous character, judged by the religious standard of the family of Abraham, and gave the type of character for the people of God of all time. With profane levity Esau treated the birthright that was naturally his, as of less value than the present benefit of a mess of food for his famished condition. To a reader that, with sustained attention, keeps in view the situation to which the Apostle speaks, the analogy of Esau's frivolity will be obvious. Whoever treated the conflict with "the sin" in the trifling manner rebuked in ver. 4, might treat the vital matter of "the promise" and "the sanctification that shall see the Lord" in the same way. It might be feared that he was ready to have peace and ease at the cost of surrendering his hold on "the grace of God," thus at the cost of the only "sanctification that shall see the Lord." Such levity comes of ignorance of the vital truths that this epistle aims to establish, and is evidence of the want of faith as the latter is defined xi. 1. Such is the character that the Scripture stamps as **profane**. But what will come of peace secured at the cost of such compliances and surrender, the Apostle intimates by an impressive reminder of the consequences of Esau's profanity.

Ver. 17. **For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place for repentance) although he sought it diligently with tears.**

In ἵστε = **ye know**, it is the indicative that the Author uses. And the facts he recites are as well known to us as they were to the original readers. As it is to something known and plain that he refers, so we ought to find no meaning in what he says that is not perfectly plain. This consideration should obviate the supposition that the repentance spoken of is Isaac's, as if Esau could not move him to change his mind. Nothing in the original narrative gives countenance to such a notion. Isaac indeed would not change; but the inflexibility in him is due to

¹ See Gen. xxv. 31 sqq.

his conviction that the will of God had become known in what had happened. The active subject of: **was rejected**, must be understood to be God, not Isaac. But it is the fact, without express thought of the agent, that is appealed to. The interpretation that refers the repentance to Isaac is occasioned by the syntax of our verse, that makes the *αὐτὸν*, in: **he sought it diligently**, refer most easily to *μετάνοιαν*.¹ From that results the statement: he sought repentance diligently and could find no place for it. Now it seems unevangelical to speak of one seeking repentance, *i. e.*, to repent, in vain; hence it is inferred, that the meaning must be repentance in Isaac. Some, however, accept the construction as stating that Esau could not repent, and find here a reiteration of what is supposed to be said vi. 6, ix. 26 sqq. of impossible repentance.² There is no real ground for these interpretations.

"As at viii. 7, *τόπον τινὸς ζητεῖν* is: 'to seek room for something,' and Acts xxv. 16 *τόπον τινὸς λαμβάνειν* is: 'to receive room for something,' meaning to seek and get room for what should take place, so here *τόπον τινὸς εὐρίσκειν* means 'to find room for something,' that it may take place. Then, however, it cannot be, as in the phrase *τόπον διδόναι τινί*,³ that what one seeks, or receives, or finds room for, is something pertaining to another that one would see take place. And, again, when one seeks, or finds room for something, he must either purpose or have with him as his own what he would have take place. Accordingly 'repentance' cannot be a change of mind in Isaac that Esau would effect.⁴ For one cannot seek, or find room for something belonging to another that on the part of that other does not even exist, but must first be brought about . . . In Esau himself a change of mind had taken place, in that he now desired what he had previously treated so lightly. It cannot, therefore, be meant, he found no room for a change of mind, which change, therefore, did not take place;⁵ and this is not what is said. It is true that it is said,

¹ See in de Wette.

² So de Wette; comp. Bengel, who from only the clause: "he found no place for repentance," interprets: "it might no more be with Esau. *Natura rei recusabat.*"

³ Rom. xii. 19, Wisd. xii. 10.

⁴ Against Baumgarten, Storr, Boehme, Tholuck, Ebrard, Lünemann, Kurtz, etc., [Stuart, Lindsay, Alford.]

⁵ Against de Wette, Ebrard.

‘Wisd. of Sol.’ xii. 10, *τόπον δίδοναι μετανοίας* = to give one room for a change of mind that does not yet exist, but is only possible. But there, the one that gives room is another, and not the person that is to change his mind. Here, on the contrary, the one that seeks room is the same that has the change of mind. For this we are rather to compare that *τόπον λαμβάνειν ἀπολογίας* Acts xxv. 16. As there Paul wishes to receive room for a defence that he has ready, so that it only needs to take place, just so Esau found here no room where a change of mind took place, since, though it was in him, it could not take effect. Thus the Apostle does not at all leave unexpressed whither Esau repented,¹ but affirms it expressly, only it was too late to find room for it, after the blessing he now craved had been given away, and was lost for him. If such is the meaning of the clause : **he found no room for repentance**, then it is a parenthesis that serves to explain the : **was rejected** in a way that expressly emphasizes that there was not wanting on Esau’s part a change of mind. As, then, the : **even though he sought it with tears**, connects back over the parenthesis with : **was rejected**, the it (*αὐτὴν*) of course refers to : the **blessing** (*τὴν ἐδολογίαν*). It has been objected that *καίπερ ἐκζητήσας* and *οὐχ εὔρεν* belong so necessarily together that every reason for another construction must yield to that.² But it has not been considered that this could only be maintained if *ἐκζητήσας* and *οὐχ εὔρεν* had the same object ; which, however, is not the case, seeing it reads *ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν*, and not *αὐτόν*. And so Esau **sought with tears** (not repentance, neither his own nor his father’s), but **the blessing** that he had lost.”³

This extended analysis of the language of our verse, made necessary by the confusion of many in regard to it, must not divert our minds from the plain intention of the Apostle in writing it. He would show impressively the consequence of frivolous profanity that could make little account of the “sanctification that shall see the Lord,” of which Esau is the scriptural symbol. It may seem an inconsiderable matter to his readers. But the Apostle says : “take care lest there be a profane person.”

¹ As Riehm, p. 771.

² So Kurtz [Alford.]

³ von Hof.

In what befell Esau see the consequence of such profanity. It may forfeit the promise as well as grosser sin, like idolatry.

In vers. 14-17 we find a unity of idea rather than a progress of thought. We have not an admonition, comprising a series of congruous notions of peace, holiness, shunning bitter strife, licentiousness, careless unconcern about sacred things. We have one double admonition, and then directions in detail, by heeding which latter the admonition will be realized. The admonition is prompted by a situation perilous with seduction to a fatal sin, and by conduct that shows that the readers treat the peril and the consequent conflict with too little seriousness (ver. 4). There is a disposition to secure peace at the cost of giving up "the profession of the hope," instead of "holding fast to it to the end," at the cost of patience and endurance. The admonition is: "seek peace with all and the sanctification that shall see the Lord." As the way to do this, the Apostle adds the directions, to take care on the side of the peril "lest any one withdraw from the grace of God." He points out *three particulars*, the root of bitterness, the fornicator, the profane person, in each of which is to be seen the realization of this withdrawing from the grace of God.

It may seem to some that it is imputing a poverty of thought to the Author to refer all these descriptions to the one notion of apostasy from Christ by Judaizing, which might be supposed to have sufficient mention in: "lest any withdraw from the grace of God." But, on the contrary, it is richness of thought, if the accumulation of expression is really amplification, and not mere reiteration. And such is actually the case. For "the sin" to be guarded against is detected in its most characteristic manifestations. They are three, and they are appropriately labeled. (a) In "the poisonous root" is designated the determined and defiant apostate described Deut. xxix. 18, 19, as one who, when he hears the words that curse him, "blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of mine heart." (b) In the "fornicator" is designated the sort of person who, like Israel with Midian, is seduced to acts of apostasy, not by inclination to the thing itself, but by over-willing-

ness to be friendly with those who are adversaries to the truth. (c) In "the profane person" is designated the light and frivolous character in respect to the vital things of saving religion, who easily surrenders the very palladium of religion without knowing what he has done, on the mere urgency of a present want. Each of these is designated by an appropriate Old Testament symbol, that is more expressive than any other descriptive terms could be, as has been shown above under ver. 15. Moreover, we notice that the Author adduces his examples in a descending scale, from the worst to what might be regarded as the least dangerous form of the evil to be guarded against. This is just the rhetorical order that is demanded. It pursues "the sin" to its incipency, and detects it in the germ. It says in effect, and gives example of the thing in saying it: "look carefully to it" that there be no bold apostate, and not even that profane levity that heedlessly involves itself in as certain loss as does the wilful apostate.

Here, then, is not only a tenacious adherence to the subject in hand, but a richness of amplification, joined to comprehensive and exact analysis and classification, that is creditable to the most accomplished authorship.

The view now presented of the unity of thought in verses 14-17 makes it easy to recognize the logical connection of ver. 18 sqq., denoted by the **For** that introduces the matter there stated. It is commonly understood that **For**, ver. 18, connects with ver. 14. When, however, verses 15-17 are regarded as expressing additional admonitions of a general character, the reference seems rather remote. But with the foregoing explanation in mind, the connection is close and the logic cogent. Seeking peace with all men, *and* the sanctification that shall see the Lord, by using special care that no one shall withdraw from the grace of God, has its ground and reason in just the truth which the Apostle proceeds to state in such grand expression; which, in brief, is this, that the readers in coming to Christ and believing on Him, come to a situation that has none of those terrors about it that characterized the giving of the law, but encourages believers to draw near to God, and hear God Himself speak, without the mediation of Moses.

Ver. 18. For ye have not come to palpable and kindled fire and blackness and darkness and tempest 19 a. and sound of trumpet and voice of words.

As a question of the text, nothing can be clearer than that $\delta\rho\epsilon\tau$ = "mount" ought not to be inserted here.¹ Neither is it to be supplied in thought from ver. 22 as "before the writer's mind from the first."² Reading or understanding "the mount," proceeds from a misconception of the Apostle's representation.³ It is not his purpose to say that the readers have not come to Mount Sinai, but have come to something else. As a matter of fact, *i. e.*, constructively and virtually, they had come to Sinai; for the ancient situation of that coming remained till Christ came, and continued to be the situation of every Jew till he came to Christ.⁴ It is the purpose of the Apostle to say to his Christian readers *where they are come by believing*. *It is that where, or situation* he describes; and he does this in the very common way of saying what it is not, and then what it is. When one uses that method, what is denied of the subject, is not any of the infinite number of things that it is not, but that which it may be mistaken to be, especially that erroneous notion that makes the necessity for affirming the true one. Such is the method of the Apostle in the passage before us. Slight as the difference may seem, when one reads as if he said: "ye are not come to the mount that is palpable," it yet involves the apparent discrepancies that have been charged on this passage. The application of the present description is ver. 25: "see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." From this it appears that the description is intended to make plain the circumstances under which the speaking occurs. In saying, then, **ye have not come, ye have come** (ver. 22), the meaning is, the readers have come to hear God speak. That is the situation that is now described negatively and affirmatively. The words before us are part of the negative description. They deny concerning this situation that it has such traits of terror as appeared when the law was given.

¹ As in the Recep. and by Del., Lün., Lindsay.

² Against Alford, etc., and version of 1881.

³ See more under ver. 22.

⁴ Comp. Gal. iv. 25 sqq.

Accordingly, all the substantives are appropriately given without the article ; and so they appear in the above translation. This permits the Apostle to select such expressions as seem to him most suitable, either from those used in the LXX. rendering of the original accounts, or from his own vocabulary. By this correct conception of the Author's thought, it is at once relieved of the appearance of any confusion about the original transactions from which he draws his descriptive traits. He may at his discretion choose and combine traits, with artistic judgment, as Leonardo Da Vinci does in his Last Supper. In this way the Author brings in the words of Moses (ver. 21) with perfect propriety, and without any discrepancy, as we shall notice in its proper place. All is very different when one reads or supplies : "the mount." *For then the Author is supposed to be describing the scene at Mt. Sinai ;* and when he mentions particular traits that are identified in the original account as attending a special event, *that* is supposed to be the scene he is describing. If, then, as in ver. 21, he mentions something of which the original account says nothing, but which belongs to a totally different event, immediately all the perplexities attending supposed discrepancies arise. Viewing the Author's thought in the way presented above, it would appear consistent, if he had seen proper to add a trait from the transactions at Kadesh Barnea in illustration of what the Christian situation is not. For instance, God spoke then with such demonstration that the Israelites cried : "Behold we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die ; shall we be consumed with dying ?" and that was made the occasion of instituting the Aaronic priesthood. (Num. xvii. 12, 13 ; xviii. 1-7). It would contribute to the impression of our verses if a trait were added that would call up that scene ; say such a phrase as : "and to men dying by scores." We only give this in order to make plain the method or rhetoric of the Author by extending it. It needs, indeed, no extension in expression, but is perfect as it is.

Having corrected the common conception of the description before us, we are relieved of the need of particular explanation of the terms of our verse, such as commentators usually make. For

these explanations are mostly devoted to noting the correspondence of the terms used here to the original account of the transactions attending the giving of the law. (Exod. xix. 10-25; Deut. iv. 11-13; v. 22-31; ix. 15, 19; xviii. 16). Their general correspondence is obvious of itself. The aim in mentioning the traits is equally obvious. They portray a situation of terror, which would make the hearing of what God commanded dreadful and insupportable, and would make the hearers deprecate hearing any more in the same way.

In regard to construction, we may remark¹ on connecting both *ψηλαφωμένω* and *κεκαυμένω* with *πυρί*, that, as regards the former, which is much debated, it fits to the *πυρί* quite as well as it would to *ῥετι*. If in the latter case it would describe the mountain as something apprehended by the senses, so it may be said in the same sense of the fire. And *ψηλαφώμενον πῦρ*, as a phrase, resembles *ἐλπίς βλεπομένη* (Rom. viii. 24). It seems likely, moreover, that the notion: "cognizable by the senses," denoted by *ψηλαφ.* is meant to characterize all the following descriptive terms of the negative part of our passage, in antithesis to the affirmative part where, such a notion being then unexpressed, it is meant that Zion, and all comprehended with it, is a "where" that is not cognizable by the senses. In the latter may be included the "consuming fire" that God is said to be² (ver. 28).

In this description the Author has mentioned what appeals to the eye (*τὸ φανταζόμενον*) viz., fire, darkness, tempest, and to the ear, viz., sound and voice. To enhance and give precision to the conception of what he affirms to be no part of the Christian situation, he refers to their effect in those original transactions from which he draws his descriptive traits. In his usual manner he takes the last mentioned first, and illustrates the voice and then the appearance.

Ver. 19 b. Which [voice] they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them. Or

The hearers of which refused a word more to be uttered to them; 20. for they could not bear that which was enjoined: If even a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned.

¹ Reproducing substantially von Hof.

² So von Hof.

The alternative translation¹ of ver. 19 b., that we have added to that of the Revision of 1881, is more literal, but not better English. The antithesis expressed in ver. 25 requires the word *παραιτησάμενοι* to be understood there in the sense of: "to refuse, decline," which is quite as usual a sense as: "to entreat." What it means there, *παρητήσαντο* means here; *for the present representation is the premise of that in ver. 25.* The *ἥς* = *which*, refers to the foregoing *φωνῇ* = *voice*. The present clause must not be taken as an indication that in the foregoing words the Apostle has been describing what occurred at Sinai at the particular time now referred to. As we have explained above, the Apostle denies of the Christian situation, that *it* is attended by a "voice of words." He means, however, that voice that was heard at Sinai. It was heard then, and with what effect, he states parenthetically in his historical expression (*ἀκούσαντες*). That voice the readers do not hear now where *they* are come. When it *was* heard, the hearers declined to have any additional word uttered to them (*προστεθῆναι αὐτοῖς*). The sequel (ver. 25) shows that this trait is not adduced as any other might be that would illustrate the people's terror. It is selected because it expresses what the people did, and with a view to the ulterior purpose of the Author (ver. 25). The refusal to hear more was not treated by God as a reprehensible thing in the Israelities. On the contrary, it was approved by God, and He willingly complied with the request to let Moses be the medium of communicating His word to the people. Nor does the Apostle in his reference to the transaction mean to place it in any other light. Moreover, not only was the voice terrible in its impression on the senses, but also for the nature of what it expressed. This insupportable nature of the things commanded is illustrated by what is cited in ver. 20: **They could not endure . . . stoned.** This is obviously well chosen. For if dumb, irrational beasts were so treated, the terrible severity of the manifestation to rational men was *a fortiori* frightful and forbidding in the highest degree.

The visible things of terror also, that the Apostle denies of the Christian situation, were once actually seen, and felt to be

¹ Comp. de Wette, Lün.

insupportable. As the most impressive illustration of this, he appeals to the effect of them on Moses. It is in Deut. ix. 19 that we have Moses' own account of the sensation with which he encountered the terrors on Sinai. It was when, after the people had sinned with the golden calf, he was admitted to God's presence as on the first occasion (Ex. xxiv.), when he was there forty days and nights. The terrors of the first occasion are described: "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Ex. xxiv. 17). Of this Moses said: "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you" (Deut. ix. 19). Here the LXX. unskillfully translates: *ἐκφοβός εἰμι* = **I exceedingly fear**. But the Apostle uses their phrase, and even extends it by *καὶ ἔντρομος* = **and (am) trembling**. The description, for we see it is that rather than quotation, is true to the facts. Moses did fear; and trembling would be the physical manifestation of it. And the cause of his fear was that burning manifestation of God, "like devouring fire," that he had before encountered without dread, but which then, because God was wroth with His people, was the manifestation of what anger in such a God must be. It is such "palpable and kindled fire" that the Apostle means to deny of the Christian situation. It is, therefore, to give precision to what he would have understood that he adds:

Ver. 21. **And so fearful was the appearance, Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.**

We reiterate, no discrepancy appears in this reference. The Apostle denies certain traits of the Christian situation where the readers are come to hear God speak. They are traits which, if existent, might naturally have the effect of making those who hear, decline to hear more in the same way, and instead have recourse to Moses again. The traits are such as were once attendant on God's speaking. The voice was heard, *e. g.*, by the people, and they could not bear it; the sight of palpable and kindled fire was once seen, *e. g.*, by Moses, who was greatly afraid. There is nothing in this that looks like confounding different events, or that makes the Apostle seem to say, that Moses confessed to fear

and trembling at the terrors of Sinai on an occasion of which nothing of the kind is recorded. There is, therefore, no ground for asking: how did the Apostle know that Moses trembled? Thus, while, on the one hand, there has been needless zeal in vindicating the veracity of the Apostle, even to assuming that he had knowledge of the fact by special inspiration,¹ there has, on the other, been manifested too much facility in admitting, that, on account of an inexact memory of the record, he has ascribed to the occasion of giving the law what occurred at another time.²

Ver. 22. But ye have come to Zion, mount and city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23. to a festal concourse and assembly of first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of perfected just ones, 24. and to Jesus the mediator of a fresh covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better than Abel.

It is thus the Apostle describes, in a positive and affirmative way, what the Christian situation is. As has been noted above, the primary notion is to describe the present situation in which God speaks and we hear. The traits are expressed by so many substantives in the dative, with nothing to distinguish them as more or less familiar subjects or in any other way. Thus the affirmation that what believers **have come to**, is **Zion**, is as much particular and express affirmation as that they have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, or to the Judge of all. This remark seems too obvious to need to be made. But the observation is necessary in order to counteract the prevalent disposition to read our passage as if the Apostle said: Ye have not come to Mount Sinai but to Mount Zion. When one so reads he does not observe that the effect is to make Mount Zion, and that believers have come to it, a familiar notion, and that thus, what follows becomes *definition* of the comprehensive notion Mount Zion. To this must be ascribed the common punctuation and rendering of Σιὼν ὄρει, καὶ πόλει θ. ζ. = "unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God;" whereas the literal rendering is as given above. The words we have before us are not an answer to the question: what is this Mount Zion to which believers have come? They answer the

¹ Ascribed to Calov.

² So Lün., Toy.

question: where have believers come to hear God speak? In that answer the item: it is Zion, is as important as any that follow, and as something overlooked, needs as much to be affirmed. A just appreciation of this matter, makes it plain, that it is no more proper to take the notion **Mount** from this place and supply it at ver. 18, than any other of the notions expressed by these substantives in the dative. Thus the text as it is given to us at ver. 18, without ὅρει, by overwhelming documentary authority, appears on internal grounds to be the only admissible text. So it will generally appear, with a well-supported text where proper pains are taken to understand it. We must only wonder what kind of conception an expositor can have of faithfulness to the task before him, who can say: "As regards the reading, ὅρει ver. 18 is assuredly not genuine. And one easily sees how readily it could come by conjecture in those sources that read ὅρει. Still, the thought imperatively demands an ὅρει for a double reason, partly as antithesis to the words Σὺν ὅρει ver. 22, and partly as the noun for *φθλαφωμένῳ*, which, according to its meaning, cannot possibly belong to *πυρί*. Those copyists, therefore, that, by way of correction, have inserted the ὅρει, have been quite right. They have just remedied an *original* mistake of the autograph. In any case the Author *thought* the word ὅρει, but omitted to *write* it. So here we have the rare case of a reading that, externally regarded, is not genuine, and yet internally is genuine." ¹

Attention has been called to five different ways of punctuating καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ,² and it has been customary for expositors to treat of this matter at length. The punctuation we have adopted in the translation is the one most commonly used.³ It has in its favor, that when one reads at sight he would naturally so read, taking the substantives in the dative uniformly with the following genitive, without suspecting any chiasmic construction such as ἀγγέλων πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων.⁴ It is only when reflection comes in, suggesting the fitness of other combinations, that one is moved to punctuate in a different fashion.

¹ Ebrard, similarly Bleek, Lindsay.

² See in Alford and Davidson.

³ Versions 1611, 1881, von Hof., Davidson.

⁴ Bengel, Alford.

Following the lead of Bengel, many¹ have attempted to establish an exact parallelism of antithesis between the things enumerated negatively vers. 18-21, and the positive things enumerated in our vers. 22-24, consisting, as they suppose, of seven members each. But the attempt is a failure. It may commend itself to minds that find a mystical import in the number seven, and a charm in the prettiness of such artificial composition. To what we think is a better taste, it would detract from the dignity and impressiveness of the grand period before us, to imagine the Author counting his phrases on his fingers while he wrote, in order to give a finished balance to his antithetical clauses.

When the Apostle says to his readers: **ye have come**, it is, as ver. 25 shows, in the sense that they have come where God speaks to them under the circumstances described. And as ver. 25 further shows, it is a situation where it is to appear, whether those who have come there will hear, or refuse to hear and turn from him that speaks. Therefore, the readers, as thus addressed, are not included in the descriptive terms that follow. They are there where those others are that are described; but they are not included in that scene, while they are as represented here. The readers are contemplated as on trial. We may, as nothing else seems conceivable, suppose it to be implied, that if they hear, and do not refuse, then they will be comprehended in the company of that scene that the following words describe. But here, in the concluding period of the especial subject of discourse in this epistle, the Apostle once more addresses his readers from the view-point of ii. 1-4: "How shall we escape having neglected so great salvation?" His present description, like chapter i., though in different fashion, is intended to represent the circumstances under which God speaks and offers salvation.

"Whither they have come is **Zion, mount and city of the living God**. For as Zion is both mount of God and city of God, one is not justified in connecting 'Mount Zion' on the one part and 'city of God' on the other. Zion is the mount that Jehovah has chosen for His continuing abode,² and is the city that He

¹ *e. g.*, Del.

² Ps. lxxvii. 17.

loves above all the dwellings of Jacob.¹ So in Old Testament manner, and contrasted with the place where Israel had seen and heard those terrors, it stands as the place of the fulfilled and still to be fulfilled promise of the people of God. But in New Testament manner, it is no longer on earth, but, as the following expression in apposition says, is **the heavenly Jerusalem**, the super-terrestrial home-place of the New Testament people of God, who know that their king has been exalted to God.² But where God dwells, there are the myriads of spirits serving Him. His revelation on Sinai also took place by their ministry.³—קִדְשׁ אֶתֶּה כְּרִבְבֹת⁴—, and where it is said of Him, He has chosen Zion for His habitation on earth, there is mentioned that countless army of spirits that surrounds Him.⁵ But their domicile⁶ is there where God sits enthroned above the world. Hence, it is said, we are come to the heavenly Jerusalem and to myriads of angels.”⁷

In the expression : **living God**,⁸ as the Author uses it,⁹ we have observed a special solemnity, that would remind the readers with whom they have to deal,¹⁰ when they come before God, and that they cannot evade or slight Him with impunity. And in the present connection : **Zion mount and city of the living God**, we must attach to it the same significance. For : **living** has a significance. It does not of itself, fall into place in the language as adopted from the Old Testament mention of Zion, mount and city of God. The Apostle himself adds this qualifying expression ; and we must suppose he does so with the same sentiment that has attended its previous use. This view is corroborated by the expression : **judge of all**, that follows, and by the severe tone of the language vers. 25-29.

It is not perfectly obvious why the Apostle mentions **angels** in this connection. For, however natural it is to mention angels in connection with the habitation of God, as von Hofmann represents, we cannot avoid remembering in this connection the light in which angels appear in the previous mention of them in

¹ Ps. lxxxvii. 2.² Comp. Gal. iv. 26.³ Comp. on ii. 2.⁴ Deut. xxxiii. 2.⁵ Ps. lxviii. 18.⁶ Jude 6.⁷ von Hof.⁸ Comp. iii. 12 ; ix. 14 ; x. 31.⁹ See above on ix. 14.¹⁰ Comp. iv. 13.

our epistle. In view of that, the inquiry is natural: why are they mentioned here? Are these **myriads of angels** the same that God makes winds and a flame of fire?¹ Are they the same by whom He delivered the law at Sinai, that are now assigned their place in this Mount Zion scene, that is in such contrast with Sinai? Are they the same angels that were charged in reference to the law to be the agents of that recompense of reward that was visited on transgression and disobedience? As they are introduced into this scene, are we to remember that, as agents of revelation, they have been compared with the Son, to express the superiority of the latter? Are we to think of them at all as having been such agents of revelation? As we see them introduced into this scene, that pictures something of the world to come of which the Apostle speaks, are we to remember that he has said that that world to come was not subjected to them? Are they the angels of whom he says, with emphasis, and we think even vehemence, that the Son did not lay hold of them to help them? (ii. 16.) These inquiries demand attention in order to adjust the present mention of angels with the previous mention of them in this epistle.

The simple expression that covers all that is said concerning holy angels in this epistle, or anywhere else in scripture, is that of i. 14. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" by which is meant ministers to God.² As such they are to be thought of as they are represented here, viz., gathered in their numbers in God's habitation. Whatever they may be or appear elsewhere, that they are for the ministry they are actually discharging. And then it is not all angels that are such, but only those that are commissioned for that ministry. Sometimes they are tempests, sometimes a flame of fire. From the same host of ministering spirits were sent forth those that spoke the word of the law, and were charged with seeing its penalty fulfilled against every transgression and disobedience. And also from the same host were sent forth all that ministered in mercy, in the various ways recounted in the history of salvation in the Old Testament, and also in the New Testament, beginning with the vision of Zacharias in the temple, and the Annunciation to the Virgin

¹ i. 7.² See on i. 14.

Mary, and the heralding of Christ's birth to the shepherds, and continued afterward in many events. But the angelic work of salvation, and the dispensation of all pertaining to that, was not subjected to them. It was not they that were sent forth for that ; but " God sent His Son " ¹ to do that work. His work was no subsidy intended to help the angels that ministered in speaking and giving effect to the law. It was help to the seed of Abraham to escape from the effect of that word and ministry.

In the scene before us, the angels appear in a fashion consistent with all this. As myriads of ministering spirits, they could not fail to be mentioned in representing God in His habitation ; for there they are, unless " sent forth " to a service. In a representation that puts **God judge of all** in the middle of the groups of persons enumerated, the angels are mentioned on the side with **the church** on earth, while on the other side appear the **perfected spirits**, and **Jesus the Mediator**. We believe that this is no fortuitous arrangement, but is well considered and significant. It is meant to represent a real order in which we are to think of the heavenly realities to which we have come, and where God speaks in the Christian dispensation. In this Zion the angels are mentioned first, and appear as ministering spirits, not ruling spirits. Here men are to find all things put under *them* ; and **Jesus**, in whom and by whom this is realized, is seen crowned with glory and honor as **mediator of a fresh covenant**. Men, however, are mentioned in two groups. First : **the festal assembly and church of first-born enrolled in heaven**. The word **church** (*ἐκκλησία*) requires us to understand the group so designated to be the chosen people of God yet on earth.² And by the expression : **enrolled in heaven**, which is a metaphor drawn from the Jewish mode of registering genealogies, the Apostle defines that he means such as are *truly* the children of God, " the true Israel." And so this expression corroborates the inference already made from the word **church**. For it is of those on earth that the Lord Jesus said : " rejoice that your names are written in heaven."³ This expression denotes that such are destined to life,⁴ and that they

¹ Rom. viii. 3.² Comp. Alford ; and Cremer, *Lex.*, *sub. voc.*³ Luke x. 10.⁴ Comp. Isa. iv. 5 ; Acts xiii. 48.

are entitled to the fullest privileges of citizenship in the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem,¹ though not yet in the actual enjoyment of them. By calling this church the **festal assembly** (*πανήγυρις*), the Apostle only represents as actual what the Lord Jesus expresses as proper for those whose names are written in heaven. The expression sets before us a joyous concourse of those that are conscious of being heirs of the promise.

The words *πανήγυρις* and *ἐκκλησία* express kindred notions, which is sufficient reason for conjoining them. The Apostle calls those that make the church: **first-born**, by which he expresses that the church is made up of first-born. There is no unequal rank or privilege in the citizenship of the heavenly Jerusalem, as in the earthly. All are of equal rank, and that the highest and most privileged; all are first-born.²

In the *middle place* of this enumeration appears: **God the judge of all**. For so we believe one must translate; and not as many:³ "to the judge, God of all." Why God should be named at this point, and not last of all or first of all, and why He should be called **the judge**, is not a little perplexing. As for the place of mention, just because it is unexpected, which means unusual, therefore we are to suppose it is intentional. In the mention of God as judge, we can see no recurrence to the thought of x. 30, that declares that God will judge His people,⁴ nor any place for the notion of a suffering and militant church.⁵ The conception here is Zion, comprehending all yet on earth and those in heaven, in contrast with any thing like Sinai, and with hearing Him who spoke on earth by angels. God is named between angels and the church yet in this world, on the one hand, and the perfected spirits and Jesus, on the other, in respect to the notion of His being **judge of all** (or "God of all," if that be preferred). While *πάντων* may express comprehension without limit, it is specially meant to comprehend all that are enumerated in the words before us. God, as such, is **judge of them all**. Or as "God of all," He is judge also of all; which comes to the same thing. It is that He is **judge of all** that is the emphatic notion here. And the

¹ Comp. Phil. iii. 20; Ps. lxxxvii. 6.

² Comp. von Hof.

³ *e. g.*, von Hof., Del., Lün.

⁴ Against Del., von Hof.

⁵ Against Del.

rendering that expresses this directly, is therefore to be preferred. No conception of God as judge, that is *both scriptural and familiar*, seems so suitable in this connection as that of Ps. l. 1-6. "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. . . Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is judge himself." This is spoken in the spirit of the Old Covenant. We can hardly suppose that "a reminiscence" of it is traceable in the Apostle's language, though it is suggestive reading alongside of our passage, vers. 18-29. But in this Psalm we see God acting as judge of His people. "'For He Himself' (and not a delegated man or angel) 'is judge' (on this occasion)."¹ He is determining who are rightly His people and who not. And so, in the Apostle's representation of Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, God is represented as judge determining Himself who may be citizens there. It is proper, also, to recall here the words of Jesus: "but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (Matt. xx. 23.) As God of all, and so of angels as well as saints, He speaks out of Zion, *Himself and not by angels*, saying who shall be saved. And here we cannot help *feeling* a singular fitness in the concluding words of the Ps. l. 23, in connection with the Apostle's expression: **festal assembly**: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.

Next are mentioned: **the spirits of perfected just ones**. **Perfected** means the same thing that we found to be the meaning at xi. 40. There it is represented that Old Testament saints were not to be perfected without the saints of the New Testament dispensation. This was realized, in the progress of salvation, by Christ's death, by which he perfected forever them that are sanctified. This perfection does not describe a heavenly state as distinguished from being on earth. For in this same sense those on earth are

¹ J. A. Alexander, on Ps. l. 6.

perfected who have believed. As we have seen, **perfected** means, having reached the goal that consists in being fitted to draw near to God. That fitness they have who by faith in Christ have received the remission of their sins. They have boldness to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus.¹ It is, therefore, a mistake to consider **perfected** here as expressing of **the just ones**, that they have finished their race through sufferings and trials and reached their rest.² Being called **just ones**, the complete expression of which is "just ones by faith,"³ they are, as such, **perfected**, whether on earth or in heaven. It is, then, neither as **just ones**, nor as **perfected**, but as **spirits**, that they are distinguished from those called "first born." The first born, though written in heaven, are not yet in heaven, as long as they are called "first born written in heaven." Those that are **perfected just ones**, and in heaven are **spirits**, and not flesh. Thus the distinguishing designation here is **spirits**. In naming them so, we need not suppose that the Apostle means only Old Testament saints, such as those referred to in chap. xi. and called "the cloud of witnesses," xii. 1. It is reasonable to suppose he means all who, having left this world before he wrote these words, are with Christ.⁴ Indeed, as all God's just ones who had so departed were with Christ, it is unreasonable to suppose the Apostle can omit, in thought or mention, any of them when representing, as here, the place where Christ himself is. And this is the next and crowning specification in this scene.

And to Jesus mediator of a fresh covenant. It is in contrast with the occasion at Sinai, when God spoke and instituted the covenant by Moses, that Jesus is so named here.⁵ We have, however, a different adjective applied to **covenant**, from what has been used before in pointing the same contrast. It has been called "new covenant," and "second covenant."⁶ Here it is called νέος = **fresh** or **recent**. If this signifies anything, we may suppose it is the notion expressed at viii. 13 in interpreting the meaning of καινόν. For it is only by interpretation that καινόν = "new" gives the meaning of "fresh," i. e., something that

¹ x. 18, 19.² As Alford.³ x. 38.⁴ Comp. on xiii. 7.⁵ viii. 13; ix. 1.⁶ Comp. at ix. 18 sqq.

replaces the old that has become stale. But that meaning is expressed by *νέος* = **fresh**, of its own force. *νέος* is used of "fresh fruits,"¹ that replace the old that are stale or exhausted; and of "new wine"² in the same sense; and of "new leaven;"³ and of the "new man,"⁴ that replaces the old. So the Apostle calls this covenant **fresh**, as that which is and is to be the covenant that fixes the relations of God and His people. This seems preferable to the notion, that by *νέος* is expressed youthful freshness and vigour that is to last.⁵ What covenant is meant, has been explained viii. 7-13; and also how Jesus is mediator of it, viii. 6; ix. 15-28. It was by shedding His blood; and this shows the propriety of the last of these specifications.

The blood of sprinkling. It is by the application of Christ's blood, which is denoted by sprinkling,⁶ that the benefits of the fresh covenant are received by believers. The special benefit emphasized in the foregoing discourse of the Apostle has been, that it fits believers to come boldly into the holies before God, as those who have been put into a perfect relation to God.⁷

Those in this scene called: "first born written in heaven and spirits of perfected just ones," have received that benefit and have their place in the holies or heaven; the latter by actual presence, the former by enrollment and destiny. Those, his readers, whom the Apostle confronts with this scene (all the traits of which *as a scene* are now before us) saying: "ye are come to Zion," are there to hear God speak, as Israel stood in view of Sinai to hear God speak. And now the Apostle adds to the mention of the blood of sprinkling the statement: **which speaks better than Abel**. We are constrained by the reiteration of *λάλων* in ver. 25 to understand that there and here the same speaking and speaker are meant.⁸ We must, therefore, be influenced in the interpretation of the present words by what follows. This requires us to understand: **which speaks** to mean, speaks to the readers, who are not to refuse to be spoken to thus, or refuse him that speaks. Therefore, when the Author makes a comparison

¹ LXX. Exod. xiii. 4; Josh. v. 11.

³ 1 Cor. v. 7.

⁴ Col. iii. 9.

⁶ Comp. ix. 13, 14.

⁷ x. 19.

² Luke v. 30.

⁵ Against Ebrard, Alford.

⁸ With Del; against von Hof.

between the blood of sprinkling speaking and Abel speaking, we must not trace the likeness beyond what this will bear. Abel's blood spoke to God, this blood of sprinkling is referred to here as speaking to men. It is in fact a comparison and not a parallel that is expressed here. A comparison touches at one point, like a sphere resting on a plane. The Apostle says : **better than Abel**, not : "than the blood of Abel," agreeably to his mode of referring to the same event xi. 4. But the original record in Gen. iv. 10 makes Abel's blood speak, and nothing but that fact justifies the present comparison. So that the Apostle's thought must be that the blood of sprinkling speaks better than Abel's blood. The *κρεῖττον* = **better** is an adverb;¹ and the comparison is not of the manner of speaking, viz., louder and more effectively,² but of the matter spoken.³ In favor of this we may accept, at least as valuable interpretation, the poorly supported *κρεῖττονα* of the Text. Recept., which occasioned the translation : "better things than that of Abel."⁴

That the Apostle should mean that the blood of sprinkling that dedicated the fresh covenant speaks to the readers, *i. e.*, to those that hear the gospel, and that he should expect his meaning to be obvious, ought not to surprise us. For, as we have noted, the expressions, **Jesus mediator of a fresh covenant** and **blood of sprinkling**, are used in express contrast with the transactions attending the dedication of the first covenant. At that time, as has been represented (ix. 19-22), when the words of the covenant had been spoken by Moses to all the people ; Moses, acting and speaking for God, took the blood of sacrifices and, sprinkling both the book itself and the people, said : "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded in regard to you." We do not mean to confound the occasion Exod. xix., when God spoke directly, and the people refused to hear, and the occasions referred to ix. 18 sqq., when Moses spoke and the people heard. We only show how the Author may represent the blood as speaking. In our verse, that represents the contrasted situation, the speaking must have the same direction as in the former case, viz., to those whom the covenant concerns. And the real speaker is God, also,

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 38.² Against von Hof.³ Alford.⁴ Version 1611.

as in the former case, when Moses spoke, but God speaking in his Son.

What the blood of sprinkling says when it speaks, must be obvious from its very designation, especially as mentioned in connection with the fresh covenant and the mediator of the same. It is the new covenant in Christ's blood.¹ It perfects forever them that are sanctified. It cleanses the conscience from dead works. It entitles those that receive it to the blessings of the new covenant, and redeems them from the transgressions of the old. By that blood they enter boldly the holies and into the perfect communion with God that is proper to a perfect relation with God. In a word, it speaks the very truth that the Apostle has so amply elaborated in this epistle, to those who were resorting to Moses and the dead works of those ordinances of the covenant instituted through him. The blood of sprinkling speaks thus for God, in the presence of God the judge of all. And there, while it speaks, are the Mediator of the fresh covenant, and the trophies of His saving work, and the angels in myriads. With reference to the angels, in view of what is said of them i. 14—ii. 3, and the reiteration in the words that now follow of the same threatening tone used there, and the same ἐκφύγειν (= "escape") of alarm sounded there, we are constrained to suppose, that the Apostle would have his readers remember, that angels were charged to visit the just recompense of reward on transgressions against the first covenant, if men refused that blood that was the redemption of those transgressions.

Ver. 25 a. **See that ye refuse not him that speaks.**

Without connecting particle, this warning has a specially solemn emphasis.² It has, however, an obvious logical connection with the whole of the foregoing passage, vers. 18–24. The λαλοῦντα = **him that speaks** has for its suggestion the λαλοῦντι of the foregoing verse; and the μή παραιτήσῃσθε = **ye refuse not**, the παρητήσαντο of ver. 19. We have already, under ver. 24, given the grounds for understanding that God is the one referred to as speaking. He speaks now by "the blood of sprinkling," where—as, in the case of the first covenant, he spoke by the tempest and

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 25; Matt. xxvi. 28.

² Comp. Del.

earthquake and other terrors of Sinai. At Sinai the people refused to hear, and would have Moses the medium of God's communication to them. The Apostle warns his readers not to refuse in the same way. The connection of thought with ver. 19 shows this. And refusing the same way must include the notion of having recourse to Moses: ἀντὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν Μωυσία λαβεῖν, καὶ ἀντὶ τῶν καινῶν προσμεῖναι τοῖς παλαιαῖς.¹ We have the whole foregoing portion of the epistle for this interpretation.

The Apostle enforces his warning by an appeal that is in the same spirit of ii. 1-3, and even reproduces its language in: **how shall we escape.**

Ver. 25 *b*. **For if those escaped not on earth that refused him that was declaring his will, much more we, who turn away from him that [is] from heaven.**

Our first effort must be to justify this translation. In doing so we assume the correctness of the text as given by Tisch. VIII. W. and H., Lach., Treg., Alford, Del., Lün., etc.

The rendering of τὸν χρηματίζοντα = **him that was declaring his will**, is, first, for the purpose of avoiding the rendering: "him that spake," that makes it appear as if the Author used again the τὸν λαλοῦντα of the forgoing clause; and, second, it is an effort to do justice to the real meaning of the word, which implies God as the subject, by its own force², and means here, as at viii. 5; xi. 7, the divine deliverance and direction expressive of God's will and counsel.³ At xi. 7 the rendering of the passive: "being warned," in the sense of having warning of what is coming, answers very well. But in the present connection the rendering: "him that was warning,"⁴ (for it is the imperfect participle) would be misleading, because it would convey the notion that those spoken of refused the warning, which is no more intended here than at ver. 19. The refusal related to the person of him that was commanding ordinances, and was in favor of the person of Moses as the intermediary.

The rendering: **escaped on earth**, which takes ἐξέφυγον ἐπὶ γῆς as connected, is the rendering that any one must make when

¹Theodoret, see in Alford.

²Comp. Grimm., Lex., s. v.

³Comp. Alford.

⁴Comp. version of 1881.

reading at sight. The rendering that connects ἐπὶ γῆς with τὸν χρηματίζοντα *appears* to be accounted for by calling it “a trajection not unusual with our writer,”¹ or “a favorite *hyperbaton* with our Author.”² But the examples appealed to³ have nothing analogous to the present language.

Our ἐπὶ γῆς expressing locality, and ἐπὶ τῇ γῇ expressing direction, always follow the predicate that they qualify. Thus von Hofmann justly declares, the would-be *hyperbaton* without example. He would relieve the situation by rejecting the best supported text, in favor of the Text Recept.: τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κ. τ. λ., giving as a reason only that the better support of the text we accept above is outweighed by the necessity of supposing such an unexampled *hyperbaton*. We do not feel at liberty to deal with the text in that fashion, any more than in the fashion on which we animadverted under ver. 22. The only necessity, as well as the only honest way, is to give a true rendering of the text we have; and that we suppose we have done above.

This rendering, that connects: **on earth** with: **escaped not**, destroys the antithesis: “on earth—from heaven” as it has commonly been interpreted, viz., “him that speaks on earth—him [that speaks] from heaven.” What made that contrast seem intended, was the notion that it has been already introduced in vers. 18-24, viz., Mt. Sinai on earth and Christ in heaven. But our interpretation of what is represented there removes that reason for supposing the contrast of earth and heaven has been introduced. There is, therefore, not sufficient ground for supplying χρηματίζοντα much less λαλοῦντα at τὸν ἀπ’ οὐρανῶν. The latter is a complete enough expression of itself; and we accordingly render it: **him that [is] from heaven.**⁴

Turning now to the interpretation of our text as translated above, we must remember, that as the ἐκεῖνοι⁵ = **those**, refers to the mention of the Israelites in ver. 19, so that mention, and *the facts of the ancient case*, preclude our supposing that the Apostle designates a sinful transaction on their part when they refused Him that issued His commands, *i. e.*, God, and would have

¹ Alford.² Del.³ ix. 15, 16; xii. 11.⁴ Version of 1881, Margin.⁵ Comp. on iv. 11, ἐκαίνην.

Moses instead. God said of that conduct: "they have well said all that they have spoken."¹ This, then, must be held to as an ascertained and well-defined thought, that must determine our understanding of all that is said here. It disposes of the common ideas with reference to what is meant by **escape**. In answer to the question: how escape? it is said: "either (1) they did not escape hearing the voice on account of their refusal; or (2), which seems more probable, they did not escape God's vengeance."² But in reference to (1), they did escape as they desired; for God gave them Moses; and, in reference to (2), God would not take vengeance on them for conduct that he commended. It is said,³ that the object of **escaped** is the subject intended in *χορηματίζοντα*, i. e., God. But, beside this being confessedly a strained construction, that draws the object of *ἐξέφυγον* from a predicative participle that is itself dependent on *παραιτησάμενοι*, it is also confessedly only admissible by virtue of adopting the ill-supported reading *τὸν ἐπὶ γῆς κ. τ. λ.* It is common to suppose that: **refuse**, etc., here means the continued rebelliousness of the Israelites in the wanderings. If by this is meant *that* obstinacy, to the *exclusion* of what is specially referred to ver. 19, then a proper interpretation forbids it. But if it means *that* obstinacy as the development of that which is referred to ver. 19,⁴ it is a sufficient reply to ask: how can a good tree bring forth evil fruit? For God called *that* refusal good.

We must suppose, then, for which indeed there is abundant reason, that *ἐκφεύγειν*⁵ = **to escape**, and *φεύγειν*⁶ have a pregnant Christian meaning that involves the object even when not expressing it, just as *σώζειν* = **to save**, and *σωτηρία*, so that it contains in itself the answer to the question: escaped from what? as "saved," of itself answers the question: saved from what? We have found reason for so interpreting *ἐκφεύγειν* at ii. 3.⁷ The extended warning of iii. 7—iv. 11 has intervened since then, which holds up the fate of those that perished in the wilderness, who were the very ones that refused to hear God and would hear Moses

¹ Deut. v. 28.² Alford.³ von Hof.⁴ Baumgarten, Bleek in Del.⁵ Luke xxi. 36; Rom. ii. 3; Heb. ii. 3.⁶ Matt. iii. 7; and Luke iii. 7; xxiii. 33.⁷ Comp. ii. 3 and note.

instead. This is sufficient to make *ἐκφεύγειν* here express its own meaning. The Apostle means : **if they escaped not** the recompense of transgressions, as we see they did not in the provocation in the wilderness. By saying : **those that refused him that was declaring his will**, the Author *is not describing their crime, but describing the persons that did not escape*. And this breviloquence, for such it is (which, as we have seen, involves the notion that they accepted Moses instead), expresses that the subjects who did so, did not thereby escape, but came under the word spoken by angels, and, as the event showed, incurred the guilt of transgression and consequently the punishment.¹

We are constrained, then, to understand the Apostle to say : **if they escaped not on earth**. This would seem an ordinary mode of expression were there nothing in the context to suggest, that the Apostle expresses the antithesis of : on the earth and from heaven, that is so common in the New Testament. But with reference to this antithesis that has been so universally assumed, it is attended with obvious difficulties. We have noticed the violent construction that it involves, that is excused as an *hyperbaton*. But conceding that as allowable, we have the difficulty of the facts involved. That interpretation makes the Apostle represent that the revelation at Sinai was God speaking on earth, and that the revelation of the Gospel was, in contrast, a speaking from heaven. But the common Scriptural way of representing this is directly the reverse. "Ye have seen," said God, with reference to the occasion when the Israelites refused Him, "that I have talked with you from heaven."² On the other hand, the signature of the Gospel revelation is : "The word was made flesh and dwelt with men."³ And this is the very conception that underlies the Apostle's representations ii. 1-3, and throughout that whole chapter. Nothing in the present context is so explicit as to outweigh these considerations and reverse the whole order of Scriptural thought in these matters. It should be admitted, then, that a fashion of thinking has been imposed

¹ Comp. ii. 1-3.

² Exod. xx. 22 ; comp. Deut. iv. 36 ; Neh. ix. 13.

³ John i. 14 ; comp. 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. v. 19.

on the text from without, and enforced in violation of the principles of interpretation.

Turning, now, to the expression : **if they escaped not on earth**, let us recall such expressions as that concerning the mustard seed : “though it be less than all the seeds on the earth,”¹ and that concerning Christ’s coming again, respecting which he asks : “shall he find faith on the earth?”² These involve no antithesis of on earth and from heaven, but simply the notion : in all the world. And such, we suppose, is the meaning the Apostle would express here. He would express the impossibility of escape ; there is no escape on earth. For the : **not escaping** comprehends an extended history, and varied situations ; even if we think only of the judgments in the wilderness. For it was not then, when they refused God, nor then at Sinai, that they escaped not. But that generation that refused had an experience that justified the expression : **they escaped not on earth**.

The fitness of the notion thus expressed is the more apparent when we observe, that it is the notion to be supplied in the next clause : **how much more we**, *i. e.*, how much more shall we not escape on earth, **who turn from him that is from heaven**. The view that would find the antithesis of : on earth—from heaven, is attended with another difficulty, viz., as to the person who is speaker in either case.³ Shall we take the speaker as the same in both instances ? or as God in the first instance speaking on earth, and Christ in the second as speaking from heaven ? The same difficulty suggests itself with the construction we have adopted ; with this difference, however, viz., that the antithesis on earth—from heaven, does of itself constrain one to expect the same subject in both parts of the antithesis, to which then is added the constraining influence of ver. 26. οὗ ἡ φωνὴ x. τ. λ., as commonly rendered, where the : “whose voice,” etc., requires us to think of only the same speaker. The construction we have adopted presents only one conception of the Author’s meaning here, viz., a contrast between refusing to hear God speak as those (ἐξεῖναι) of old refused, and refusing to hear Christ (ver 25

¹ Mark iv. 31.

² Luke xviii. 8.

³ Comp. the representation of the question in Lindsay.

a); according to which, by: **him from heaven** must be meant Christ. Such, moreover, is what every reader feels must be intended here; and, as a matter of fact, our verse 25 *b*, is commonly quoted in that sense. Only strong exegetical constraint, especially the influence of *οὗ ἡ φωνή*, ver. 26, compels many to give up that view, and understand that God is meant as the speaker in both instances. We think that ver. 26 rightly construed has no such influence on the meaning of our ver. 25 *b*. The Apostle's meaning, then, is: how shall we escape on earth if we turn from Christ who is the agent of revelation to us, and an agent from heaven, speaking to us by that blood of sprinkling, and revealing all that is accomplished thereby. Thus far the thought is but the reiteration of ii. 3, except that instead of: "so great salvation" as preached, we are pointed here to the great ransom that effects the salvation. What adds to the thought as here expressed, is the notion of *a fortiori* by comparison with the ancient case. But the ancient case, as here referred to, was not one of despising God or the ordinances, but of refusing to hear God and choosing Moses instead; and yet they escaped not. And, correspondingly, in the Christian case, what is meant by ἀποστρεφόμενοι = "**turning away**," is not something more intense or contemptuous than παραιτησάμενοι = **refusing**, but essentially the same thing as it concerned Christ as the speaker. It means a refusing to hear him speak, and turning from what he says by his blood of the covenant, to take Moses instead. If the others escaped not, when refusing to hear God with so much reason for doing so, how much more certain is it that we shall not escape, if we turn from him who speaks the very "things that accompany salvation!"

Having so expressed himself, the Author, as we see, has come back to the point from which he started ii. 1-3. There the thought is propounded interrogatively, as a subject. Here it is affirmed positively as a demonstrated conclusion. As such, the present statement has the sound of a finished period, conclusive, solemn and impressive. To extend it, by the expression of additional, and not closely related thoughts, weakens its force. Here, then, we put a period, and understand vers. 26-29 to express something quite distinct, with a view to the final exhortation ver. 29.

Ver. 26. **He whose voice shook the earth then, now however has promised, saying: Yet once will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven.**

As the *οὗ τῆ φωνῆς* κ. τ. λ. has commonly been rendered,¹ viz., **whose voice then shook the**, etc., it connects this sentence closely with the foregoing verse. This is natural with the reading of the *Text. Recep.* and the supposed antithesis of: Him that spoke on earth—Him that speaks from heaven. So construed the *οὗ* refers to *τὸν ἀπ' οὐρανῶν* = "Him from heaven," and by what is here said of the voice then shaking the earth, it is, as we have noted, made necessary to understand the: "Him from heaven" to mean God. To the common rendering of our verse there are two objections, beside the considerations offered above. (1) As it is prompted by the supposed antithesis of: earth and heaven, we observe that here the antithesis does not exist, but both are combined in one common effect, and **heaven** here cannot mean the same as heaven vers. 22, 23, 25. (2) It makes *ἡ φωνή* the prominent subject of which we expect to hear something more predicated; but instead of that, the subject expressed by *οὗ* is taken for the predicate: **he hath promised.**² (3) It gives the impression that the Apostle in quoting Hag. ii. 6, understands the Prophet to make a contrast with the occasion at Sinai, when God shook the earth, and to announce that he will make another and final shaking, when both heaven and earth shall tremble. Whereas, when we read the Prophet we find nothing of the kind. His: "yet once,"³ if it involves a reference to previous convulsions, means something recent, most likely the recent revolution in the Babylonian empire. And, on the other hand, "within a little," of the original (which is omitted in the LXX. rendering and in the Apostle's quotation), shows that the Prophet, by: "I will shake heaven and earth," means national convulsions soon to be, and which came to pass before Christ and in preparation for His kingdom. There is no reason for supposing the Apostle understood the Prophet's words in any but their plain sense. For the passage at and long before his time had been one of the most

¹ But see MacKnight who translates: "His voice then shook the," etc.

² See Lün.

³ Comp. Henderson on Hag. ii. 6.

accepted Messianic prophecies, and commonly understood in the sense just expressed.¹ Neither of these difficulties (1), (2), appears if we translate : **He whose voice shook the earth then.** For this gives us the proper subject for : “has promised,” without indirection. And : **the voice that shook the earth then,** defines the subject in the way *the Apostle* would have it regarded in this present connection, without imputing to the *Prophet*, whose words he quotes, any reference to Sinai and its shaking.

So construing the Apostle’s words, their sentiment is easily interpreted ; and that he quotes the Prophet’s language in the imperfect form of the LXX. presents no difficulty, nor does his inverting the order of the words : “the heaven and the earth,” and adding : **not only—but.**

With reference to what has been represented ver. 25, but without grammatical connection,² the Apostle expresses the impressive thought before us. He designates God as subject by circumlocution³ drawn from the foregoing representation, and recapitulating it. The phenomena of Sinai, to which reference is made, justify the (implied) statement that God **then shook the earth**, as Jud. v. 4 sq., Ps. lxxviii. 8 sq. show. He says of God, so defined, that **now he has promised, saying**, etc. The **now** is antithetical of **then**, and the perfect : **has promised**, is the proper tense by which to refer to a prophecy of which one would make a present use, (a) whether to point to the present or future fulfillment, (b) or to draw an inference regarding the character of the promiser or regarding his purpose or methods. It is the latter use that the Apostle makes of the words he quotes. And **now**, as antithetical of **then**, expresses that God who was manifested at Sinai, is the same who has said : **yet once I will make to tremble not only earth but also heaven.**

The Apostle proceeds to interpret the point of so representing God.

Ver. 27. **Now this : yet once**, signifies the removing of the things that are shaken, as made in order that they may await those things that cannot be shaken.

¹ Comp. Henderson, Hab. ii. 6, and Whitby.

² Comp. viii. 13.

³ Comp. ii. 10 ; v. 5 ; x. 30.

It is common to understand the Apostle to lay stress on the ἔτι ἅπαξ which is then translated: "yet once more,"¹ and that he deduces from it what is stated in the following words. But ἔτι ἅπαξ means **yet once**, leaving it unexpressed whether heaven and earth shall or shall not be made to tremble still again, when it has been done that once. Whereas, "yet once more" implies that the trembling shall be once and final. Only: **yet once** and not: "yet once more" is a true rendering of the Hag. ii. 6. Nor may we suppose the Apostle means more here.² But: **yet once** is no adequate premise for the inference that would be expressed in the following words. We are compelled to think, therefore, that by: **this yet once** the Apostle means the whole sentiment of the Prophet as he has quoted it, as if he said: yet once, etc.³ It is the whole quotation that affords the premise for the inference we have in our verse. What the Apostle infers is as expressed in the rendering we have given, which is materially different from what is usually understood. The common rendering, viz., "signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain"⁴ makes ὡς πεποιημένων an explanation, derived from the nature of created things, of how it comes that the things shaken are removed; so it happens to things made. And when they are removed, it is in order that what is not to be shaken may remain; such is the supposed reasoning. If such a statement is not to be regarded as nonsense, it must still be rejected as irrelevant here. For **the things that remain** must be not different from the new heaven and new earth of which Isaiah speaks, and it is expressly said that they too are created, made.⁵ We connect the ὡς πεποιημένων with ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα, and then μείνῃ must have the meaning of: **wait for**,⁶ and τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα is its object. Then our statement declares, that the things that are shaken were made in order that they might wait

¹ Versions 1611, 1881.² Calvin; *Sed Apostolus in hac voce non insistit.*³ So MacKnight; Kurtz; Hengstenberg, *Christologie*; Alford, pronounces it absurd.⁴ Version 1881, similarly 1611.⁵ Isa. lxxv. 17; lxxvi. 22, ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ μένει ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ.⁶ So von Hof, Stuart; see others in Del., Alford; comp. Acts. xx. 5, 15, 23.

for the things that cannot be shaken, and it appeals as proof of it to the promise that they shall be removed. Such is a significance the Apostle finds in the words of the Prophet. The statement introduced by : **yet once** involves such a significance. For when God says of heaven and earth : "I will make them to tremble," the meaning is, that He will remove them ; and this He says of things that He Himself has made. He made them, therefore, only to continue till He should remove them. When that which is not to be shaken and thus not to be removed is ready, then the others shall be removed ; for they only wait for that. That **the things which are not shaken** *have* come, is not inferred from the words of prophecy, as is commonly supposed ; which occasions the translation : "yet once more," so as to give *that* phrase such import. That they have come is the well-known fact, as Apostle proceeds to state it ver. 28 : "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken," and it is to this accepted fact that he brings the considerations now presented in order to press the exhortation : "let us have grace." The fact that the kingdom that was not to be moved had come, was one of the fundamental truths of Christianity proclaimed with the gospel itself, and it should not seem strange that it is brought in here without preface. It is not affirmed here that it is not to be moved, but is named in its recognized character as "a kingdom that cannot be moved." Let us only remember, because of its peculiar fitness to the matter before us, the memorable prophetic discourses of Jesus relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, especially the words : "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."¹

The sentiment now expressed by the Apostle appears pertinent if we take vers. 26, 27 in the way already suggested, as disconnected grammatically with what precedes. It then appears as a comprehensive statement, like a stated thesis, that lays down a fundamental principle that explains a great variety of phenomena. The Apostle has, in a protracted treatise, dealt with a succession of them that constituted heaven and earth to the Jews, *i. e.*, the sum total of the Jewish form of religion, showing that

¹ Luke xxi. 33.

all have been shaken and removed: (a) the word spoken by angels and their ministry attending it (i., ii.); (b) the mediation of Moses (iii. 1-6); (c) the Levitical high priesthood (v. 1-10); (d) the whole Levitical order of priests (vii.); (e) the Old Covenant (viii.); (f) the whole complex of Levitical sacrifices with the locality for them, *i. e.*, the Tabernacle and its appurtenances (ix.); the law itself (x). The divine signature on all these is, they were made to await that which is not shaken and not to be removed (ix. 8). The appropriateness of Hab. ii. 6 to express this appears in its comprehensiveness, not in a particular thing predicted. For though a Messianic prophecy, the Apostle does not develop its sense in that respect, but points to an underlying principle. What God has promised of heaven and earth that He made, comprehends in principle the truths the Apostle has now represented. In designating God by circumlocution as: **He whose voice shook the earth then**, the Author introduces the notion of the covenant and legislation instituted at Sinai; and so connecting God as manifested in that epoch with the promises in Hab. ii. 6, and the significance of the thing promised, he denotes that the things spoken at Sinai with the shaking of the earth, are removable and removed when God shakes not only earth but also heaven.

As a thesis-like comprehensive statement and conclusion, our vers. 26, 27 make a most fitting finale to the whole foregoing treatise. And the following verses 28, 29 are the equally fitting and comprehensive admonition.

Ver. 28. **Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which let us serve God well-pleasingly, with reverence and awe.**

The logical connection of this verse with the foregoing expressed by: **Wherefore**, is that of admonition to the ground for the admonition; *i. e.*, **Wherefore let us have grace.** The ground is expressed by: **having received a kingdom that cannot be shaken.** But, as the **Wherefore** relates to the representation of vers. 26, 27, the: **having received**, etc., in some way reiterates the thought of those verses. This it does; but not as expressing that what was prophesied has been fulfilled to us, and that we have received the things that remain. Those that understand the: "yet once"

[more] ver. 27 to be interpreted by the Apostle in the sense that, when heaven and earth are shaken, the things that are not to be shaken will remain, have a notion whose fulfillment is yet to be; since, whatever heaven and earth are then supposed to mean, they have not yet been removed. They are then obliged to understand our: **having received a kingdom that cannot be moved**, as “proleptically designating us as in possession of that whose first fruits and foretastes we do actually possess.”¹ But *βασιλείαν παραλαμβάνοντες* does not mean: beginning to receive a kingdom, any more than *ιερατείαν λαμβάνοντες* (vii. 5) means: beginning to receive a priesthood. The Apostle expresses that the kingdom is a thing received. And what he so expresses is a reiteration of the thought of vers. 26, 27 in the sense that *this* is a thing that cannot be shaken for which *therefore* those things that are shaken awaited. Thus he calls it: **a kingdom that cannot be shaken**. That we have this, is the ground for the admonition *ἔχωμεν χάριν*. How it is such a ground, can only be understood according as we understand these words to mean: **let us have grace**,² or: “let us be thankful.”³ The latter rendering would be the obvious one if we could connect *χάριν* with *θεῶν*. This might be done were the reading *λατρεύομεν* correct.⁴ But without that dative that usually appears with *χάριν* *ἔχειν*, the phrase is stiff as an expression for: let us be thankful. On the other hand, in the other seven instances of the use of *χάριν* in our epistle, it means “grace.” Thus we are warranted in taking that as its meaning here. At iv. 16 the Author has exhorted: “Let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.” At the throne of grace we are to find grace. The grace that we may have, because we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken, must be the same. It is the same as that mentioned ver. 15: “lest any fail of the grace of God.” And again xiii. 9 the Apostle says: “it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats.” Here he says by the following clause (indirectly) that “by it we serve God well pleasingly.” All this makes it evident

¹ Alford.² von Hof., Del., Alford, etc.³ Versions of 1611, 1881, Stuart.⁴ von Hof., who defends it.

that by **grace** the Apostle means something that has been clearly represented in the epistle as that which characterizes the service rendered to God by those who receive the revelation of Christ and receive Christ Himself as their high priest.¹ To those that object that : **let us have**, is an unallowable expression here,² we may reply : whether it is easier to say : Let us draw near with our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (x. 22), or to say : **let us have grace**? The relation of: "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken" to "having grace," denoted here, is indirectly through the need of rendering appropriate service. Having our citizenship in a kingdom of God, we must **serve him well-pleasingly**, and this, as the epistle has shown, we can only do by the grace received from the throne of grace to which we approach boldly through our great high priest.³ Thus the double hortatory expression : **let us have—let us serve**, expresses, that acceptable service to God is only rendered by means of grace. The obverse of this is, that without this grace we shall only serve God unacceptably, and consequently we shall find Him, not on a throne of grace but what the following verse describes. Such is the natural logical connection of the following statement, denoted by the **for moreover**.

Ver. 29. **For, moreover, our God is a consuming fire.** These words are adopted from Deut. iv. 24. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire [even], a jealous God." And in that chapter this dread of God is set over against the graciousness of His covenant relation with His people, as in the Second Commandment, where He is called a jealous God, shewing mercy and visiting iniquity. By this brief word the Apostle sounds once more the note of alarm as first uttered in the : "how shall we escape" (ii. 3), and, since then, reiterated again and again, always in alternation with representing the great salvation.

Agreeably to the sentiments expressed in the Preface to this volume, we give for Chapt. xiii. of our epistle, the exposition of von Hofmann, in a translation, complete as he gives it in his commentary. Besides the sentiments expressed in our preface, we are moved to this adoption into our own volume of his whole exposition of chapt. xiii., because justice to him would

¹ Comp. ix 14.² *e. g.*, Alford.³ iv. 14-16.

any way necessitate an extended quotation of his original exposition of verses 10-16. We find it convincing and satisfying, and could only reproduce it. And we may say the same of his exposition of verses 20, 21. For if, in this latter case, we do not feel the same satisfaction, we at least prefer it to that of any other interpretation, and have nothing to set forth that is more satisfactory to ourselves. But as these verses 10-16, 20, 21, comprise the most of the chapter, and all that makes the chief interest in its exposition, it is as well to give the exposition of the whole in von Hofmann's words, and thus produce a homogeneous result. The little we have to say, by way of addition or dissent, is indicated by being put in [], except the translations of the text of chap. xiii., which, not being given by von Hofmann, are added, so as to conform to the rest of this volume. If the suspicion occurs to any reader that our singular expedient comes from indolence, we would represent that no labor bestowed on the present work has been so difficult as the effort to translate literally, and yet to render into readable English, the following exposition, and other translations from von Hofmann that appear in this volume.

XIII. 1. Let love of the brethren continue. 2. Forget not to shew love unto strangers; for thereby, some have entertained angels unawares.

The list of particular admonitions begins with love of the brethren, as Christians should cherish and exercise it toward one another. **Let it continue**, is said, not so much because it was already in existence, though vi. 10 proves that such was the fact, but rather because, as x. 25 shows, it was in danger of dwindling away. **Love unto strangers** comes nearest to love of the brethren; it was but the active demonstration of it to those, who, as companions in the faith from foreign parts, were entitled to fraternal reception, which they needed all the more, seeing that their confession in a strange locality made them doubly strangers. Were the confidence of their Christian faith to flag in the readers, there was danger that they would the less receive such companions in the faith. That the *μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθες* = **forget not**, is so intended, and not as recognition of their exercise of hospitality,¹ appears from the exhortation being fortified in the manner following, which otherwise it would not need. Appeal is made to Abraham and Lot, who, by showing hospitality, received angels as guests without knowing it. So they also may receive guests who are more and something greater than they appear to be, and get a blessing for

¹ Against Kurtz.

their house that they do not look for. For the word of the Lord Matt. xxv. 40, ["Inasmuch as ye did it unto these, my brethren, etc.,"] has no application here.¹

Ver. 3. **Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being yourselves also in the body.**

Just as Christians from foreign localities have, in a special respect, need of brotherly love, so, again, in another respect have those that suffer imprisonment, or are otherwise in any sort of distress on account of their faith;—for the reference can only be to prisoners of this sort.² The former, viz., those in prison, they should help **as bound with them**; the latter, viz., those in distress **as being themselves in the body**. As surely as both these *ὡς* are meant alike, so surely is it erroneous to understand in the first case such a devotion as if they themselves lay imprisoned,³ which, indeed, would preclude their rendering aid; in the other case, on the contrary, such a devotion as is founded on the consideration that they may encounter like distress. In both instances must be intended a consideration that should become a motive to action in them. They must be actually in the same bonds, as they are in the same bodily life. They are not the former, however, by means of the fetters that men have laid on those in prison, but by means of those that the Lord has laid on themselves. It is as those that have been bound by the Lord, that those owing sympathy to imprisoned Christians are *συνδεδεμένοι* = **bound with them**; thus it is in the same sense as Paul uses the expression *συναγχλωτος* = "fellow-prisoner."⁴ Thus the readers are to help the one as fellow-Christians, the others as fellowmen.

The latter makes the transition to what follows. The admonitions, so far as now given, have been directed to relations within the Christian communion; what follows, which as to form recalls Rom. xii. 9 sqq. has respect to conduct in the relations of natural life.

Ver. 4. [Let] **Marriage** [be] **had in honor among all, and** [let]

¹ Against Lün., *et al.*

² Against Kurtz.

³ So, *e. g.*, Bleek, Tholuck, Del., Lün.

⁴ Comp. Rom. xvi. 7.

the bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers will God judge.

This treats of the marriage relation. It is a groundless assumption that both clauses say the same thing. And to construe ἐν παντι as neuter, is not justified by passages where it means: "in all things,"¹ because then here it must rather signify: "in every way."² If we take it as masculine, we may compare the ἐν ἡμοῖς 1 Cor. xiv. 11, and the meaning is, marriage shall be held in honor by all, in the eyes of all, both by those that are married, and also by those that for their persons suppose they must refuse to be married. That the latter may not be supposed to occur among born Jews,³ is only correct, if it appears impossible that, of the Essenes in Palestine and Syria⁴ who contemned marriage, any had joined the Christian congregations. Still the sentence concerns also such as in general lived unmarried; else the Apostle would likely add only the warning: adulterers, and not: fornicators and adulterers will God judge.

Ver. 5. Be ye free from the love of money, content with such things as ye have. For himself hath said: I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in anywise forsake thee. 6. So that with good courage we may say: The Lord is my helper I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?

As to what concerns a life of gain, they must hold themselves free from the love of money, to which the connecting participial clause, as a nearer definition, adds something without which they would fall into that. For, whoever is not content with what he has, must lay himself out to get money that he may be provided beyond the present requirements. How ill would this become us who know that he, he himself (as the emphatic αὐτός expresses, or it would not be there, thus that God in contrast with men who are, of course, not to be trusted), has promised not to neglect us! For we should take to ourselves what Jehovah promised to Joshua, as He said to him: "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."⁵ In the LXX., these words are rendered: οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψω

¹ As Phil. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 9 sq. 1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5.

² Against Bleek, de Wette, Del., Lün., Maier.

⁴ Philo. *quod omn. prob. Lib.* § 12.

³ So Lün.

⁵ Josh. i. 5.

σε οὐδ' ὑπερόψομαί σε. But the Apostle knows that they are the same words wherewith Moses assured Joshua,¹ or even David Solomon,² of Jehovah's helpful assistance, and that in those places they are rendered in a way that better corresponds to the original text: once: οὐτε μή σε ἀνῆ οὔτε μέ σε ἐγκαταλίπη, and οὐκ ἀνήσει σε οὐδὲ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπη; the other time οὐκ ἀνήσει σε καὶ οὐ μή ἐγκαταλίπη. This customary rendering of the verbs אִרְפָּךְ and אֶחָדְךָ, as it thus appears to be, the Apostle follows. That the same words exactly are found in Philo³ cannot therefore surprise one, and can the less surprise one the more simply and naturally this rendering of the few words follows the original text. There is no need of any other explanation of this occurrence;⁴ least of all, of that incredible one, that regards the Apostle's citation as determined by the form in which he read it in Philo.⁵ Did the Apostle mean only to exhort to contentment, he would not proceed as he does. For when he says the promise of God, not to forsake us, makes us boldly say what is written Ps. cxviii. 6: **The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?** this saying, indeed, much transcends what may suit for an expression of quiet contentment in God. But we remember that x. 34, he spoke of the damage to property and goods that the readers had incurred an account of their confession. The like can happen to them also again, and they must be prepared for it, without becoming dispirited on that account. Hence,⁶ he tells them:

Ver. 7. Remember them that have the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their way of living, imitate their faith.

The relative clause: **which spake unto you the word of God**, designates⁷ the rulers here referred to as those from whose mouth they learned⁸ the word of God that is now published to the world, and, in fact, first learned it.⁹ For only when so intended does he adequately designate them, so that the readers can know

¹ Deut. xxxi. 6, 8.

² 1 Chr. xxviii. 20.

³ *de confus. ling.* § 32.

⁴ Against Del.; as against Boehme.

⁵ So Bleek.

⁶ Comp. Del.

⁷ Comp. Lün.

⁸ Comp. Acts viii. 25; xiii. 46.

⁹ Comp. Boehme, Bleek, Lün.

whom they are to remember. But he would not so express himself were he writing to Christians of Jerusalem or Palestine, from whom the word of God went forth [?]. To those to whom he wrote came preachers of the gospel from elsewhere, who then presided over the churches they gathered. How these are to be remembered is expressed by the relative clause, which we must express demonstratively, and which connects with τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν defined as this is by : “ who spake to you the word of God.” **The issue of their life**¹ is what they are to contemplate,² that they may thereby be fired to imitate their faith. That they died as martyrs can by no means be deemed certain,³ inasmuch as their end, if they only blessedly died in the faith that they had preached, was in any case fitted to encourage others to a life of faith whose end would be like their own. To die thus, one might readily and with joyous courage endure every hardship that one suffered for Christ’s sake.

The Apostle has recalled a time that is past, the time when the word of God was brought to the readers by those that are now dead and gone. He is to be understood as speaking from that time when he proceeds with :

Ver. 8. **Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and to-day [yea] and forever.**

The **yesterday** is the time past that is behind us ; the **to-day** the present in which we stand. As now the readers, if they look back, encounter their teachers from whom they then received the word of God, and who now are no more among the living, they have in Jesus Christ, the one exalted to God,⁴ Him who is ever alike and the same ; He is now the same that He was when He was preached to them, and remains so everlastingly. What He is, however, that He should be to them ; not now another than then when they became believers on Him. In that case also the doctrine to which they should hold is the same by which they were converted to Him. Therefore the Apostle continues :

Ver. 9 a. **Be not carried away by divers and strange doctrines ; for it is good that the heart be established by grace.**

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13.

³ Against Lün.

² Comp. Acts xvii. 23.

⁴ Comp. Del.

They ought not to let themselves be forced away from their position and driven into a false way by a motley variety of doctrines opposed to the one that has Christ for its contents, nor by strange teachers that have nothing in common with that doctrine, and come from other quarters. For, that the reading περιφέρουσθε is derived from Ephes. iv. 14, and that we are to read παραφέρουσθε¹ can hardly be doubted. As for the sort of motley doctrines opposed to Christian truth here intended, it is usual² to infer them from the following: **not by meats**, etc., that gives the ground for the present admonition, and in this fashion, viz., that this clause is in advance taken as pointing a contrast between **grace** and **meats**. But this cannot be the Apostle's meaning. Having just said: **be not carried away**, the emphasis must rest on βεβαιωσθαι = **to be established**,³ and he means to say, it is right and good, it is proper that there, where grace reigns, the heart should become settled in itself, instead of yielding to every impression coming from anywhere. Grace is meant in antithesis to the law, under which, of course, the heart can attain to no steadfastness.

Ver. 9 *b*. **Not by meats, wherein they that walked were not profited.**

This in a fresh turn of thought, following the foregoing sentence which is first of all concluded in itself. For the Apostle writes: οὐ βρώμασιν and not καὶ οὐ βρώμασιν, now by this antithesis emphasizing χάριτι and excluding a fashion in which the heart may wish to be established. So that one cannot derive from this what sort of doctrines he meant by: "divers and strange doctrines." It would be no right establishing of the heart, were one to acquire inward assurance that he is in the right condition by what he allows to be his food. The present does not treat of being just before God any more than the foregoing that contrasts "being established" with "being carried away." What is treated of is the confidence that one is doing right, as in the foregoing it was the confidence of having the right doctrine. It is impossible to suppose⁴ that the Apostle refers to sacrificial meals, because it

¹ Jude 12.² Comp. Lün.³ Comp. de Wette, Delitzsch.⁴ As, *e. g.*, Bleek, de Wette, Lün., also Kurtz.

would not be those, but the sacrifices themselves that would give one the self-assurance. Least of all, then, can the thank offerings be meant, with which alone were connected meals eaten by those presenting the offerings. The expression : **by meats** requires one to think of the nature of what one allows himself for food, and not of an eating that was commanded in contrast with the omission to eat ; whence, also, the eating of the Passover is excluded. What one eats must in his eyes be of such a nature, that he may suppose himself in that respect to be in a right condition. He uses only clean food, viz., such as the law does not forbid, and that has not been made unclean by heathen hands, and he regards his carefulness to taste nothing that a Jew ought not to taste as something that gives him the assurance that he is in the right condition of life, because thereby he proves that he belongs to the Jewish nation. As in both instances it has to do with the cleanness of food, there is no force in the objection,¹ that an **establishing of the heart** is aimed at, not by means of food itself, but by avoiding unclean food. That the use of food in general is the matter treated of here, appears also in what follows : **wherein they that walked were not profited**, where περιπατεῖν ἐν τινι² can only be meant of the manner of daily life.³ Of such, who so lived that they were always mindful to eat clean food, the Apostle says, that they have no profit from that. As this is true of Jews in general, there is no need to think of abstinence such as is described Rom. xiv. as a weakness that is to be tolerated, or Col. ii. as un-Christian legalism.

And that we are to think of the universal Jewish carefulness about clean food, and not also of super-legal ascetic choiceness in food,⁴ appears from what follows, which, following without a connecting particle, obviously offers an independent yet kindred thought to that which the Apostle has just said.

Ver. 10. **We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.**

As regards the writing of the sentence, ἐξουσίαν after ἔχουσιν is abundantly certified by external evidence ; and that it was inad-

¹ Of, *e. g.*, Bleek, Lün.

³ Comp. Boehme.

² Ephes. ii. 2, 10.

⁴ Against Del.

vertently omitted is easily explained by the similarity of the two words. Thus it says : those serving the tabernacle have no right to eat of the altar that we have. The expression : *οἱ τῇ σκηנῇ λατρεύοντες* recalls : *οἱ λειτουργοῦντες τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ* as *מִשְׁרְתֵי מִזְבֵּחַ*¹ was translated, or : *οἱ λειτ. θυσιαστηρίῳ κυρίου*, as *מִשְׁרְתֵי יְהוָה*² was rendered, where, regarding the latter, it may not be said that the rendering was due only to perplexity.³ Our expression more readily recalls : *οἱ λειτοῦντες τῷ οἴκῳ*, the rendering of *מִשְׁרְתֵי הַבַּיִת*.⁴ Finally it recalls, that, viii. 5, it was said of the legal priests : *οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων*. Hence it cannot be deemed extraordinary that the Apostle writes *οἱ τῇ σκηנῇ*, and not *οἱ ἐν τῇ σκηנῇ λατρεύοντες* ;⁵ nor can one, (least of all because it reads *λατρεύοντες*, and not *λειτουργοῦντες*),⁶ detect in the designation something contemptuous, or even a reference to idolatry.⁷ Did our expression occur in an Old Testament context, it would be simply a designation of the priests. But after reading, as we have done, in chaps. viii. ix., how the tabernacle of the law was contrasted with that of the New Testament, we cannot believe that in this sentence, that treats of us Christians, the Jewish priests are simply called : **those serving the tabernacle**. And what would be said of them ? The legal priests were entitled to appropriate for themselves certain parts of the sacrifices offered through them, and to use them for their support. When they did that, it was not a part of their priestly service, as has been commonly affirmed in consequence only of a misunderstanding of Lev. x. 17,⁸ but acceptance of the corporeal wages that they drew from it. But in our context it would say of Christians, that they have an altar, of which the Jewish priests were not entitled to derive anything for their corporeal support. Of course, no one so understands it ; but it is explained as saying, that they cannot attain to the enjoyment of the spiritual goods that result to believers from the sacrificial death of Christ.⁹ But what right has

¹ Joel i. 13.² Joel i. 9.³ Against Del.⁴ Ezek. xlv. 11 ; xlv. 5 ; xlv. 24.⁵ Against Bengel.⁶ Comp., e. g., Heb. ix. 6.⁷ Against Del.⁸ Keil., *Handbuch der bibl. Archæologie*, I., p. 235 ; comp. on the contrary, My *Schriftbeweis*, II. 1, p. 281 ; Kurtz, *d. alttest. Opfereultus* ; Del.⁹ So Lün.

one so to explain? Was then the eating of the pieces of the sacrifices that fell to the priests an enjoyment of the spiritual goods that resulted from the sacrifices for those that sacrificed or for the congregation? And allowing the explanation permissible, why should such be said just of the priests of the Jewish people, and not of non-Christian Jews in general? It has been declared that the members of the Jewish nation in general are meant.¹ But what right has one to interpret the expression so, in conflict with the passages of the LXX quoted above, and of the epistle itself? Or some have paraphrased: the congregation of the law, and even their priests were not entitled to this.² But it does not say this. Yet did it mean the non-Christian Jews in general, or their priests; neither one nor the other craved the benefits resulting from the sacrificial death of Christ. What does it amount to, then, to say, that they are not entitled to them? Finally, our expression would, in fact, apply to the Jews, or to the Jewish priests of the present time, (who could by no means be designated as "those serving the tabernacle"), who, as withdrawn from the law, would be comprehended by the effect of redemptive history as being so entitled, while the Jews that kept aloof from the church of Jesus were not.

In one and the same sentence **altar** and **tabernacle** are mentioned without the tabernacle being distinguished as one that is different from the tabernacle of the altar. Hence we must suppose that both belong to the same sphere of redemptive history; that we Christians have the tabernacle that is served, quite as much as we have the altar on which its sacrifice is offered. What, then, is this **altar**? Some say: the cross on Golgotha;³ others say, that it is the table of the Lord's Supper.⁴ Our sacrifice took place on Golgotha, but we have not that cross, nor the place where it stood, but only Him who was the sacrifice. Therefore, it cannot be properly said of the cross of Christ that we have it, as the Jew had his altar. The table of the Lord's Supper we have, but it is no altar like that of the legal sanctuary; the sacrifice, to be spoken of immediately, did not take

¹ So Lün.² So Del.³ So, *e. g.*, Bleek, Lün., Del., [Alford.]⁴ So, *e. g.*, Boehme, Ebrard, Maier, Bisping.

place on it once for all. Accordingly, it is no mere whim,¹ when one refuses to designate just anything² as intended by altar, and understands, instead, in a New Testament way the expression: **we have an altar**. The term is brought from the Old Testament sphere, but deals here with the manner in which we have received the expiation of our sins. Keeping within the sphere of representation that this altar, so intended, brings with it, we have it said, that the servants of God's house are not entitled to eat from that altar. If it were said of the Old Testament church, they have an altar from which the servants of the tabernacle are entitled to eat, it would be understood, of course, that the tabernacle is meant to which the altar belongs. How, then, here, where the New Testament church has the altar in question, should the tabernacle not likewise be that of the New Testament? But as this church has not, like the Old Testament church, a priesthood to whom exclusively belongs the service of God's house, because it is itself the house of God, so the subject of: **we have** cannot be different from: **those that serve the tabernacle**, in any other sense than that the latter designate the New Testament church as the counterpart of the legal priesthood.³ And it is so designated, because of its priestly doing, its divine service, should be said (for the reason to be given directly), it gives to this priesthood no title to wages that may be compared to the wages the legal priests took from their altar.

Ver. 11. **For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.**

When the high priest goes before God with sacrificial blood to expiate sins (for such sacrifice is meant, whether *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* be genuine or not), he burns the beast, whose blood he uses, outside of the camp. The Apostle uses the present *εἰσφέρεται* and *καταχέεται*, as he does *εἰσίσσιν*, ix. 6, expressing himself in the words of the prescription of the law, and meaning a continuing occurrence as written in the law. Three cases of such expiation were prescribed, viz., when the high priest had committed a sin that

¹ Against Del.

² [Comp. in Lindsay.]

³ Comp. My *Schriftbeweis*, II. 1, p., 458 sq., and Kurtz.

affected the whole congregation (Lev. iv. 12), when sin had been committed that comprehended the entire congregation (Lev. iv. 21); the yearly atonement that was both for the priesthood and the congregation (Lev. xvi. 27). In all these instances the officiating priest himself was concerned in the expiation for which he sacrificed, and even when he, every year on the day of atonement, sacrificed the sin-offering for the congregation;¹ otherwise, how could he have been priest of God for Israel, if the congregation remained in their sins? Hence, also, in these cases, he had no wages appointed for his service in sacrificing. The beast that was sacrificed had no other designation than that which was accomplished by the use of its blood. Therefore it must, as was the case, be wholly destroyed by fire, and that outside of the camp; not because it was unclean, as charged with imputed sins,² but in token that only the use of its blood pertained to the congregation. What did not come into the sanctuary,³ must also not remain within its precincts, not even in its destruction, because the beast was appointed purely for the expiation of the sins of the people, and what further happened to it was only for the purpose of making evident this, its exclusive destination. Were it said, then, in our ver. 10, that non-Christian Jews or their priesthood have no part in what is given to us through the self-sacrifice of Christ, what connection with this would that prescription of the law have? It is said, that as the priests of the law dared not eat of that holiest sin-offering, so they have no title to eat of the antitypical sin-offering of our altar; and this correspondence is

¹ Against Del.

² Comp. against this My *Schriftbeweis*, II. 1, p. 255.

³ [Here it is common to remark on τὰ ἅγια = the holy place, that, "as at ix. 8, 12, 24, 25 and x. 9, it probably means, not the Holy place properly so called, but the Holy of Holies, in which the blood of the sin-offering was brought on the day of atonement, and which only typified heaven, whither Christ, as High Priest, is entered with His blood," Alford, so Del., etc. This, the final mention of τὰ ἅγια in this epistle, harmonizes with all we have represented against the above interpretation (comp. at the texts cited), when we notice that: the blood brought into the holy place by the high priest, sufficiently describes the sacrifice intended, without the Holy of Holies needing to be mentioned. None but the high priest offered that sacrifice, and what the high priest offered was none other than that sacrifice; and when he entered the Holy place with that, as he must to enter the Holy of Holies, no other went with him.]

declared to be clear as the sun.¹ But in that case, the reason why they dared not eat of the one and of the other must as much correspond as that sin-offering corresponds to the sacrifice of Christ. But that is as little the fact, as that our eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ (which is supposed to be the thing allowed us but denied to those that serve the tabernacle) corresponds to the priestly eating of the sin-offering. If it were meant, that we may do what the others may not to do, viz., eat from our altar, how would it serve for confirmation that the latter may not eat, to appeal to that high-priestly sacrifice of which nothing whatever was to be eaten? This ordinance of the law must have its counterpart only in a like thing that obtains with respect to the only sacrifice of our altar, viz., the high-priestly sacrifice of Jesus. If, on the other hand, we have correctly understood, that we Christians, who have no other sacrifice than that of Christ, are not entitled to any wages for our temporal life derived from it, such as the legal priests were entitled to from the beasts they sacrificed, then the confirmation of ver. 10, consists in an appeal [ver. 11] to the prescription of the law, typical for this case, that the high-priestly sacrifice concerned expiation exclusively, and the priests had not, as in other sacrifices, emolument therefrom for their sustenance. By this we are taught that we should simply appropriate the expiation of our sins that is accomplished by the high-priestly sacrifice of Jesus, and not expect that we are to reap earthly advantage from the fact that we are Christians.

Ver. 12. **Wherefore** Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate.

The **wherefore** refers to the thought expressed in that ordinance, as to a law of the history of salvation. By a *καὶ* = **also**, that refers to the whole sentence, not merely because the subject, but also because its predicate differs from those foregoing, the two cases are designated as corresponding to one another and of like character. But they differ in this, that Jesus has sanctified the people **through his own blood**,² whereas ~~there~~ the high priest went before God with other blood than his own; moreover, in this, that he was not himself guilty as those were for whose sake he

¹ So Del.

² Comp. ii. 17.

offered himself a sacrifice ; and finally in this, that with him all coincided in one in his suffering death ; whereas, in the Old Testament counterpart, the sacrificing of the beast and its burning were distinguished, and belonged to contrasted localities. But the unity of the two transactions is in this, that the sanctification of the people took place in a fashion that denoted that the people were to have nothing else from it but just their sanctification. For it took place by the suffering of the sanctifier, especially in suffering death without the gate. He did not suffer with his people what befell him, but he suffered as one thrust out of their city, and by them held deserving of and given up to that which befell him. A sanctification of the people so accomplished excluded every thought, as if, beside the benefit of being sanctified thereby, it offered also temporal and earthly advantage among the people that had thrust him from them to such a death.

The connection between verses 11 and 12 expressed by: "Wherefore," has been understood to indicate rather, that those who persevere in holding to the nation and the law of the Old Covenant partake as little in the death of Jesus as of the flesh of the high-priestly sacrifice that was to be burned outside of the camp.¹ But the reason for not partaking of the latter was not that one belonged to the nation and law of the Old Covenant ; and what is discoursed of is not those that have no part in Jesus' death ; but of Him it is said why He suffered without the gate. Again some lay stress on this, that thrusting out the bodies of those sacrificial beasts, that were excluded from the theocratic communion of the Jewish nation, must have been the symbolic counterpart of the exclusion of the sacrificial body of Jesus from the Jewish covenant people.² But conceding the correctness of the underlying significance there ascribed to the burning without the camp (which is as far from being correct,³ as it is to call that fire, the fire of God's wrath, as if it were fire of an altar),⁴ then the exclusion from the Old Testament people of God would have for its correlative, exclusion from the New Testament Church, and

¹ So, *e. g.*, Bleek.

² So Lün.

³ Comp. Del., remark against Bahr in the Theol. Stud. u. Krit 1849, p. 936 sqq.

⁴ As Richm—Zusätze, p. xxii.

not exclusion from the unbelieving Israel.¹ For this reason the same thought has been so far modified as to see in the burning of the body of the sin-offering without the camp a partial breaking loose from the legal sanctuary, to which, in New Testament fashion, there must be so complete a correlative, that Jesus was not only buried without the city, but also was slain on an altar that was without the legal sanctuary, and appeared before God with His blood, not in the earthly, but in the heavenly Holy of Holies.² But supposing that in that burning there was implied a partial renouncing of the legal sanctuary (which is not the fact, since to the divine service, that was concluded by the use made of the blood, it stood related as an unavoidable appendage, that did not affect the performance), still the burial of Jesus, as extraneous to the *ἐπαθεν*, does not belong here; and that the renouncing of the legal sanctuary would have been less complete had Jesus brought His blood before God in its Holy of Holies, is a thought that is utterly incapable of development. Of course, it was not only the Jewish nation that expelled Jesus, but it was so ordained of God that He should suffer death as one cast out, and that Israel's unbelief redounded to the salvation of the Gentiles, and there remained not the slightest pretence, as if Israel had any superiority of which it might boast before God. But it does not follow from this that one may say of God, He renounced the legal sanctuary by permitting Jesus to die so; but His forsaking and giving it up was the punishment for Israel's behaviour to Jesus.³ Moreover the present has nothing to do with the legal sanctuary, but with the sphere of the people of the Sinaitic law. Jesus suffered death as one excluded from them, the death by which He sanctified the Church; so that one could not have the benefit of His sanctification of the Church and at the same time remain in the undisturbed enjoyment of what a Jew had by continuing to belong to his nation.

The representation of ver. 10 was only that the Christian must not expect or claim of his Christian condition that rests on the sacrificial death of Jesus, that it will promote his earthly and

¹ This also against Riehm.

² So Kurtz.

³ Comp. Matt. xxiii. 39; Luke xiii. 35.

temporal enjoyment along with his participation in the expiatory death of our High Priest. And in vers. 11, 12 the New Testament counterpart of that burning of the legal high-priestly sacrifice has led to the additional thought, and impressed it on the readers, that the death of Jesus that sanctified the people, was the death of one that was cast out from His, the Jewish nation. Hence the exhortation proceeds as in

Ver. 13. **Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.**

This is, as He bearing His cross went out of the city, so the readers should depart out of the legal congregation laden with His reproach. This does not mean that they are not to seek salvation within the Jewish communion;¹ but that they should not think of participating in the salvation of Christ and still remaining in the communion of their nation in matters of divine service, seeing this could only be at the expense of their confession of Him whose reproach they must make their own. The expression: **without the camp** is purposely repeated in order to designate the sphere of the legal congregation, not the nationality.

Ver. 14. **For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after [the city] which is to come.**

Neither does this verse intimate that they should cease to be Jews, nor that they should suffer themselves to be driven from their cities by Jews.² When the Apostle speaks here of a city, he means one that comprehends Christians as such in a community that corresponds to their Christian condition. Such a city, says he, we have not; here below we have none in continual standing. That is, ὧδε belongs to μένουσαν, that ὧδε μένουσαν may form the antithesis of τὴν μέλλουσαν, as ἔχομεν of ἐπιζητοῦμεν. We have not such a city, but we look longingly for it; not one present here below, and thus continuing have we, but we long for the future city. The Jew had in the earthly Jerusalem the city in which for him Israel's relation to God was embodied. Christians have nothing of the kind, and cannot therefore lose it, if they are Jews, by giving up the communion in divine service that has its seat in Jerusalem, in order to be wholly and exclusively Christians.

¹ So Lün.

² Against Grotius, *et al.*

And this the readers should do ; thus they should also give up participating in the sacrificial service.

Ver. 15. **Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is [the] fruit of lips which make confession to his name.**

Through Jesus who has sanctified them by His sacrifice, when the legal nation excluded Him, they should sacrifice ; through Him, not through those who, according to the law, are “those who serve the tabernacle.” A **sacrifice of praise** (זִבְחַ תְּהִלָּה) where-with one praises God for His goodness, and indeed a continual sacrifice, as διὰ παντός ix. 6 was used for the daily priestly service, such should their sacrifice to God be, through Jesus as the mediator of their relation to God, and thus mediator of every display of it in actions ; that is continual praise of His name, or, as the Apostle expresses it, following the translation of Hos. xiv. 3, **fruit of lips confessing his name.** This expression recalls on the one hand ὁμολογεῖν ἐν τινί,¹ which is to make a confession that has some one for its contents ; on the other hand ὁμολογεῖσθαι τινί, or τῷ ὀνόματι τινος, which occurs as the rendering of הוֹדָה.² But it differs from both, and means making a confession respecting the name of God and bearing witness to Him.

Ver. 16. **But to do good and to communicate forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**

To one direction, as to how Christians are to sacrifice, is added this other, which conjoined by δέ = **but**, denotes that something beside is to be considered. Hence there is a transition from the first person plural subjunctive to the imperative. It is: doing good and sharing with others. For this and the former the reason is given, viz., that God is well pleased with such sacrifices, in as much as they are genuine expressions of piety, and obtain with God as such ; whereas the legal sacrifices of beasts may be offered in a way devoid of piety. It is hardly justifiable to take this reason as relating only to the second exhortation,³ seeing that prayerful praise of God is expressly designated as a sacrifice.

Our vers. 10–16 follow ver. 9 without any particle of transi-

¹ Matt. x. 32 ; Luke xii. 8.

² e. g., LXX. Gen. xxix. 35 ; Ps. liv. 8.

³ So, e. g., Bleek, Lün., Del.

tion. How do the thoughts they express relate to what precedes? In ver. 9 it is said, that the readers should not stablish their hearts by meats, so as to assure themselves of their being in the correct condition. Did they do so, they would ascribe to holding to clean things to eat a value that is incompatible with the Christian condition of grace, and would prove that they desire to be regarded as belonging to the nation which had got no good of holding to clean things to eat, whereas their belonging to Jesus gives them a share in the sanctification of the people. His high-priestly sacrifice, from which we have this gain, leaves no room for earthly advantage with which one may provide himself from it, but makes it one's duty not to mind the reproach that comes with the communion of the Crucified, and, refusing to participate in the legal divine service, to bring the right sacrifice. Thus they are not permitted to attach importance to clean meats, nor to remain in the communion of the legal sacrificial service, but their hearts should be stablished by grace and their sacrifices should be praise to God and doing good. The transition from ver. 9 to ver. 10 without conjunction puts the: **not with meats** under the point of view of what follows, and lets us understand what proclivity it was in the readers that occasioned this negation. It was not a proclivity to righteousness of works, but a proclivity to hold faster to the Jewish nation and its religious life and services than their Christian condition permitted.

In vers. 1-6 the Apostle exhorts to conduct becoming Christians. Then, vers. 7, 8, a reference to the faith that departed teachers had preserved even till death prepares the transition to what was to be said to the readers as confessors of Jesus in opposition to the Jewish legal life, vers. 9-16. Now the exhortation proceeds to what respects their behaviour within the Christian organization.

Ver. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit [to them], for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy and not with grief; for this [were] unprofitable for you.

They should follow their rulers, and be instructed by them. What is said in support of this admonition implies that by insub-

ordination they had, perhaps not seldom, made the burdens of their rulers needlessly onerous. They hold a different relation toward their rulers and should pray for them.

Ver. 18. **Pray for us; for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things** [or among all].

For in these words the Apostle is not asking for prayer for himself alone.¹ Those who suppose he does, appeal to the following: "I exhort," etc., where transition is immediately made from the first person plural to the first person singular.² But precisely the contrary is to be inferred. Up to the present, the Author has always spoken in the first person plural when he would refer to himself (v. 11; vi. 1, 3, 9, 11). If, then, he meant only himself here, what influenced him just in ver. 19 to change to the first person singular, which he retains to the end of the epistle? It is just because he would not have his epistle read as the utterance of his personal penetration or view, but as the expression of a judgment that was shared by those that were known as participating in his official work. He lets his own person appear for the first time at the end; and the most natural transition presents itself when he would enforce the exhortation to intercessory prayer, by making his speedy return to them the object to be gained, that being something that concerned his personal relation to them.

What follows the request: "pray for us," as a reason for it, is commonly understood, by those taking the *πεποιθαμεν* of the *Recept.*, in the sense of "we are convinced;" or, when, as is correct,³ one takes the more difficult *πειθόμεθα*, then in the sense of "we persuade ourselves," viz., **that we have a good conscience.** But one can only have or not have a good conscience. One can not be convinced that he has it, or persuade himself that he has it;⁴ unless the meaning be that one persuades himself and makes himself believe so, when the contrary is the fact. In addition to this, it is very doubtful whether *πειθесθαι* can mean what it is made to mean: Acts xxvi. 26, *οὐ πειθομαι* is equivalent to: "I

¹ Comp. Del.

² So, e. g., Bleek, Lün., Kurtz.

³ Against Reiche, *comm. crit. in N. T.*, III., p. 147. ⁴ Comp., e. g. Boehme.

will not be convinced." If, accordingly *ᾧ* cannot belong to *πειθόμεθα* as recitative of the thing predicated, it must assign the reason for a belief¹ (for *πειθεσθαι* means "to believe," not "to suppose"),² the contents of which is to be derived from what precedes. If we believe, says the Apostle, that you pray for us, the reason is that we have good conscience, seeing it is our will to have our conversation towards all³ as it ought to be. He asks that they will pray for him because his belief that they will do so has this reason.⁴ But still more, in greater measure still ought they so to do (so says the Apostle now, for his own person in particular) that he may so much the sooner be restored to them.⁵

Ver. 19. **And I exhort [you] the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.**

That *περισσοτέρως* belongs to *τοῦτο ποιῆσαι*⁶ is natural, seeing that the particular object for which they should intercede requires a more earnest intercession. From the object of prayer as here proposed, we see that the Author is no stranger to the readers. He had passed some time with them before, and desires, and means to come to them again. But his arrival depends on circumstances, so that it may be delayed or hastened. Only so much is implied in the words, and not that he is a prisoner, and asks for prayers for his release.⁷

And now he concludes the epistle with a prayer.

Ver. 20. **Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, on account of the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, 21 make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, doing in you that which is**

¹ Comp., *e. g.*, Eurip., *Hippol.*, 1241.

² Against Lün.

³ Comp. 2 Cor. i. 12; Eph. ii. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 12.

⁴ [The foregoing interpretation does not appear correct to us. We prefer the common one. We may let *πειθόμεν* mean: "we believe." But the psychological matter adduced above against one's saying: "we believe that we have a good conscience," has, in our opinion, no weight. One may so express himself toward others, when aware that among them there is a current of feeling of mistrust concerning himself. Such a condition of things is implied by the language before us (Comp. Del. and on ver. 22 below). We have, therefore, given above the usual rendering of ver. 18, and not that which von Hofmann's comment calls for.]

⁵ Comp. Philemon 22.

⁶ So, *e. g.*, Bengel.

⁷ Against Ebrard on ver. 23.

well-pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory forever and ever, Amen.

The Apostle here designates God by a title = **the God of peace**, that is very current with him,¹ but does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. Its frequent use by him makes it unlikely that its occurrence here refers to any discord among the readers, either already rife or threatening.² It occurs in the same sense in which he expresses his benediction: "peace from God the Father." As in that benediction³ peace is the actual fact of that which makes men blessed, so **the God of peace** is the God who displays his divinity in realizing this actual state of things.⁴ And so also here, where the God so named has displayed Himself as such in the resurrection of Jesus, and would display Himself as such in working that which is well-pleasing to Him in the readers. In the first respect He is called: **who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep on account of the blood of the eternal covenant**. In this the Apostle recalls two Old Testament passages, Isa. lxiii. 11, and Zech. ix. 11. The former of these passages relates to a time when Jehovah contends with His rebellious people, in view of which the so different time of Moses and of his people is remembered, and it is exclaimed: "Where is he that brought them up out of the sea [along] with the shepherd of his flock."⁵ The Apostle borrows from this description of what Jehovah did to Moses, the expression for what God did to Jesus in bringing Him up from the world of the dead. As Moses was the shepherd of the Old Testament people of God, so is our Lord Jesus **the great shepherd** of the New Testament people of God. Death dared not hold Him, but must release Him that He might lead God's people into God's rest. But by this it is not said that the expression ἀναγῶν,⁶ beside the resurrection of Jesus, comprehends also His exaltation

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Rom. xv. 33, xvi. 20; Phil. iv. 9.

² Against Boehme, Del., Kurtz, *et al.*

³ Comp. at 1 Thess. i. 1.

⁴ Comp. at 1 Thess. v. 23.

⁵ We omit the exposition by which von Hof. establishes this rendering, and considers the substantially correct rendering of the LXX. Our English Bible gives us the result.

⁶ Comp. Rom. x. 7.

to heaven.¹ Seeing the designation: "the great shepherd of the sheep" originates in the comparison of Jesus with Moses, we are not to understand that there is here any allusion to the "shepherds" of the readers in whom they slighted the over-shepherd.² But what is held up to view is, how much greater that is which they have in Jesus, than the Old Testament people of God had in Moses;³ and how much greater a thing God did for Jesus that they might have Him for their Shepherd, Leader and Overseer, than Jehovah did for Moses.

The ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου has a similar purport. It is not to be connected with τὸν μέγαν or with τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν,⁴ if it is written with allusion to Zech. ix. 11. This allusion indeed, is denied, or held to be doubtful.⁵ Even the allusion to Isa. lxiii. 11 has been denied.⁶ But it cannot be denied, that precisely the thing that seems strange in the present passage, is found in Zech. ix. 11, and only there; unless one is content to take the construction of ἐν αἵματι x. τ. λ. referred to above, according to which, that which made, or rather makes Jesus the great shepherd is blood of an eternal covenant⁷ of God. For, in any case [with the construction supposed], the words in question must connect directly with τὸν μέγαν, and in the quality of shepherd and overseer of the flock, as he is here named, he must be so great through the blood of an eternal covenant of God. It would not be said, that on account of His shedding his blood the flock is committed to Him, and He appointed its Shepherd;⁸ but His oversight of the Church, because it comes about by means of such blood, must therefore be so paramount and have such value; thus his ποιμαίνειν τὰ πρόβατα must be a ποιμαίνειν ἐν αἵματι.⁹ Then it is self-evident that passages, like Acts xx. 28, cannot be

¹ Against Bleek, de Wette, Maier, Kurtz.

² So Kurtz.

³ Comp. iv. 14; x. 21.

⁴ Against Boehme, Ebrard, Riehm, p. 601, Lün., *et. al.*

⁵ As, *e. g.*, Maier [Del.].

⁶ *e. g.*, Lün.

⁷ von Hofmann's rendering of διαθήκης is: *Gottesordnung*, agreeable to what he endeavors to establish concerning the word at ix. 15. We ignore it here as not affecting the substance of the present discussion.

⁸ Against Del.

⁹ Comp. Rev. ii. 17.

compared; and not less so that *ποιμαίνειν* is not a notion to to which *ἐν αἵματι* will fit.

Accordingly, *ἐν αἵματι* *κ. τ. λ.* belongs to the whole clause as the nearer definition of what God has done to Jesus. Some who recognize this, suppose that comparison may be made to passages like ix. 25, and obtain the sense, that God brought Jesus from the world of the dead in this way, that He came bringing with Him blood of an eternal covenant of God.¹ But this explanation ignores the assumed force of *ἐν*; as one is not to think of blood of an eternal covenant of God as the means of the resurrection of Jesus. Where, then, will one find the explanation of this *ἐν*, if not in Zech. ix. 11, where the translation reads: *καὶ σὺ ἐν αἵματι διαθήκησ σου ἐξαπέστειλας δεσμίους σου ἐκ λάκκου οὐκ ἔχοντος ὕδωρ*? Of course, the Apostle's thought cannot refer to such a sentence. But one sees here again that he is familiar with the original Hebrew text. It is Jehovah who, at the time when Zion's King rules from one end of the earth to the other, has done also this besides (for *בְּ* refers to the whole clause), viz., he has let go out of a pit of imprisonment Zion's captives, His children in foreign parts, out of a pit without water, i. e., of imprisonment but not of drowning and destruction; He has released them for the sake of the blood that was once shed when Zion (or Israel as we read Exod. xxiv.) was restored to its relation to Jehovah. The *בְּ*, in *בְּרִייתָךְ* has the force of: "on account of," "for the sake of;"² and so the translator uses his *ἐν*, Hebraizing, as when it is used of the price of things,³ yet still more like cases where it expresses: with a view to what something happens.⁴ And so the Apostle means when saying *ἐν αἵματι* *κ. τ. λ.* What is said here to have happened, happened for the sake of blood, the shedding of which served to restore an eternal covenant of God, and He who was raised from the dead by God shed the blood for the sake of which He was brought out of the world of the dead, as captive Israel, in the prophecy, was brought forth from the pit of imprisonment. But the emphasis is on **eternal**. If the covenant of God that

¹ So Bleek, Kurtz.

² Like Gen. xviii. 28.

³ Winer Gram., p. 365 [390].

⁴ As, e. g., Matt. v. 7.

this blood was shed to restore, is eternal, then (in antithesis to Moses, who was brought out of the sea) He that was brought from the dead for the sake of that same blood, remains the Shepherd of God's flock, that He now is, without ceasing, as He stands in an unchangeable life, having become alive from the dead.

May God, then, make them ready to do His will—for of course *καταπίσαι* is not imperative middle aorist—God who has done as expressed, and so has shown Himself as the God of peace forever. May He also show Himself such to the readers by making them finished in every thing good, to do His will, which, indeed, can only come about by Himself working in them that which is to Him well-pleasing.

It is common to take *διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χρ.* as belonging to *ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, as if what is further emphasized is, that what God works in us well-pleasing to Himself, He works through Jesus Christ. But as in the principal clause the emphasis rests on the *αὐτοῦ* with which it closes, to the effect that we should do the will of Him who has shown Himself in Jesus as the God of peace, so also in the added clause the emphasis will rest on *αὐτοῦ*. For it is what is well-pleasing to Himself that He works in us; and thus the added clause also concludes with *αὐτοῦ*. Did *διὰ Ἰησ. Χρ.* belong to it, one would expect it to stand directly after *ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν*. When we take: **to whom** [be] **the glory forever** as referring to God,¹ it becomes quite impossible to justify the position of *διὰ Ἰησ. Χρ.* as belonging to what precedes, and separating the relative clause from *αὐτοῦ*. It is, moreover, essentially the position of these words, that occasions the doxology to be taken as ascribed to Christ,² since otherwise the whole sentence, beginning with: “the God of peace” is so framed as to require us to refer the doxology to God. And so then: **by Jesus Christ**, put emphatically front, may belong to the relative sentence,³ because through Christ God is glorified in all eternity,⁴ whether in us what is well-pleasing to Him comes to pass

¹ So, *e. g.*, Bengel, Del.

² So, *e. g.*, Bleek, Lün., Maier, Kurtz.

³ Comp. on Rom. xvi. 27.

⁴ Comp. Gal. i. 5.

or not. That it does so belong, the reader could observe if he emphasized the two *αὐτοῦ* as they are to be emphasized.

The epistle concludes with this prayer quite like 1 Thess. v. 23. It has more and more assumed the form of a letter. What follows is quite epistolary. Here the Apostle confers with his readers altogether personally in the first person singular.

Ver. 22. **But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation; for I have written in few words.**

First of all he exhorts them to take in good part his word of exhortation, which in fact the epistle is, resulting continually in exhortation as it does. For he has, after all, expressed himself briefly;¹ so he adds with a *καὶ γάρ*, where *καί* denotes that he might expect a ready hearing in accordance with the shortness of his letter.² For he certainly does not mean that they may thank the brevity of the letter for the harsher and sharper expressions, that would have been avoided had he written with more thorough amplification and more careful limitation.³ Just where he speaks most sharply, *e. g.*, v. 12 sqq., or xii. 4 sqq., he has in fact not expressed himself very briefly. But he could say that he has expressed himself briefly, not in comparison with what he would like to have written to them beside,⁴ but in comparison with the comprehensiveness of his subject. It was an object with him to bring the fullness of the material he had to deal with into the smallest possible compass, so as not, by a too lengthy letter, to occasion impatience and ill-humor in the readers. For the letter was to be read publicly and all at once. He does not call attention to the rich contents, but to how briefly he has expressed it. Thus he holds a relation to the readers as if he felt the need of excusing himself for having written at all.

There follows an item of news; for such is:⁵

Ver. 23. **Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty.**

Did this express: "ye have heard and know now⁶ that Timothy is released from imprisonment," no object could be per-

¹ Comp. 1 Pet. v. 12.

² Against Maier.

³ So Kurtz.

⁴ So Del.

⁵ Against Bleek, de Wette, *et. al.*

⁶ Comp. Kühner, Gramm., II., p. 118.

ceived for this remark.¹ On the contrary, did the readers know that Timothy had been imprisoned, the news that he was released must first be told, that the Apostle might announce that he would visit them accompanied by Timothy. But the latter announcement is conditioned on Timothy's joining him soon enough. It has been remarked,² that ἀπολύειν may denote any dismissal where one goes away or where one suffers or commands one to depart. But what is the use of this remark? So understood, the sentence would express, that Timothy has already departed, to betake himself somewhere else away from the Apostle. For without nearer qualification ἀπολελυμένον could only be understood of a dismissal that would terminate his stay with the Apostle. Instead of that, we see the Apostle expecting Him. We must understand, then, that Timothy had been imprisoned, and the readers had known it; but, at least as the Apostle assumes, they had not intelligence of his release. He knows that the news is particularly dear to them, and especially because then they would see himself amongst them. For with him, not without him as the emphatic μετὰ expresses, will the Apostle come to them. It is only a question, whether ἐὰν τάχιον ἔρχηται is meant as a condition: "if he come so soon;" or, as ἐὰν θᾶτον occurs,³ as denoting time: "as soon as he comes."⁴ The latter does not suit the: "I will see you,"⁵ which does not signify the departure, but the arrival. Therefore what he says is, that he will not come to them without Timothy, but makes this conditional on Timothy's coming soon enough. The comparative: τάχιον implies the possibility that his arrival may be delayed. To this possibility is opposed the other, that he may come soon.

Ver. 24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

Judging by ver. 17, the rulers are so mentioned expressly, not without reason. They from Italy needs no other explanation than: "The brethren from Joppa," Acts x. 23. What is called attraction of prepositions⁶ occurs here as little as at Phil. iv. 22. The

¹ Comp. Lün.

² So also Del.

³ e. g., Plato, *Alcib.* I., 105 A.

⁴ So Del.

⁵ Comp. LXX., 1 Sam. xx. 28; Rom. i. 11.

⁶ Kühner, *Gram.* II., p. 474.

custom of greeting calls for such an assumption in neither place,¹ and we are not to think of a congregation of Italian Christians.² The Italian Christians are meant, and they purely,³ as in Acts xvii. 11, 13: "those in Thessalonica," and: "those from Thessalonica" are interchangeable, without the latter needing to be explained by the anticipated representation of the departure from Thessalonica to Berea.⁴ It is not different from calling the Spartans οἱ ἀπὸ Σπάρτης; ⁵ wherefore one cannot make the distinction that οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ are those in Italy, and οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰ., are natives of Italy.⁶ The use of ἀπό is, rather, the same as when members of the church are called οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας.⁷ It is the ἀπό denoting: belonging to, and not: derivation from. If then: **they of Italy** are the Italians, or more exactly Italian Christians,⁸ there is no ground for supposing such are meant as were out of Italy, staying somewhere with the Apostle.⁹ It has been objected that the Apostle was not qualified to send greetings from the Christians in all Italy.¹⁰ But he was as much so as when, Phil. iv. 22, he writes: "all the saints salute you," for which he certainly had not the permission of all the saints in Rome; or even, Rom. xvi. 16: "all the Churches of Christ salute you," for which he got permission still less than for that of the Churches of Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. In all these places he sends salutations without commission to do so, in the name of those of whom he knows that he acts in their spirit when he does it.¹¹ But he would not specially send greetings in the name of Italian Christians, if he were not in Italy. And one may, perhaps, add, he would send greeting from the Roman Church in particular if he were in Rome, and were not on the point of leaving the country from whose Christians he sends greetings. [von Hofmann infers, conjecturally, that Paul was at some point, say Brundisium, awaiting an opportunity to voyage to the East, which opportunity he must seize whether Timothy arrived or not.]

¹ As, e. g., Thucyd. 7, 70, 5.² As, e. g., Thucyd. 6, 32, 2.³ Comp. Tholuck, Ebrard, Del.⁴ Against de Wette, *in loc.*, and Kurtz, p. 42.⁵ Herod 8, 114.⁶ So Del.⁷ Acts xii. 1.⁸ Comp. on Phil. iv. 23.⁹ Against Bleek, I., p. 282, de Wette, Lün., Kurtz, p. 42.¹⁰ So Kurtz, p. 41.¹¹ Comp. on 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

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